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MAY 2008

neatoday

ELECTION '08

GET IN THE GAME

Step up to the plate this summer to make a difference for support professionals.

SEE PAGE 20

Ohio maintenance electrician Jimmie Tipton

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20 | TEAM NEA

Batter Up!

COVER STORY Michelle Menard of Las Vegas likes to travel in the summer, but this year she'll be batting for the NEA All-Stars in the game of politics. If our team wins, life will be better next season: More money! Less testing! Hooray for the kids, and for us!

25 | ARTS INTEGRATION

Dance of the Trapezoid

Do opposites attract? Teachers are striking sparks of excitement by marrying the arts with math and science.

28 | STUDENT SAFETY

Silencing Cyberbullies

New technologies, new tools for learning, new ways to beat up fellow students. Can we keep the good and stop the bad?

30 | TRY THIS!

Stop "Summer Loss"

For many students, summer is the season for forgetting what you taught them. But it doesn't have to be.

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COVER PHOTO: ISAAC BREKKEN;
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FROM TOP: ISAAC BREKKEN; CAMERON SCOTT
ILLUSTRATION: DAVID CLARK

PHOTOS PAGE 3:
FROM TOP: MEIKO ARQUILLOS; SACRAMENTO BEE/ FLORENCE LOW; ROSS STRACHAN (BEAR), IMAGE SOURCE PINK (COMPUTER); ROBERT CHASE

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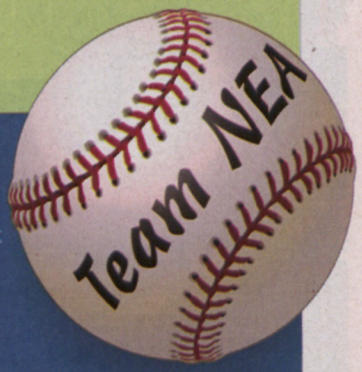


Get in the Game!

Get your summer started at **www.nea.org/ref?game**. Learn what other NEA members are doing on the campaign trail and find fun ways to display your status as an all-star activist (even if you're a rookie!) Check out our giveaways and come back often to see if you're one of our featured activists.

WANTED: Catchy Slogan for NEA's Professional Pay Campaign

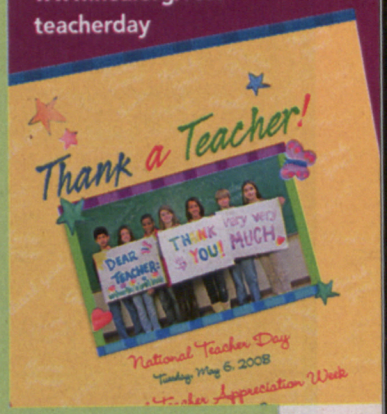
Can you think of a slogan with Snap, Crackle, and Pop? We won't leave home without it, if your slogan inspires and is short enough to fit on a mug, T-shirt, or bumper sticker. Just do it! Help spread the word that we're worth professional pay. Visit **www.nea.org/pay**.

Digital Sticks and Stones

Find strategies to handle cyberbullying, get information from PBS's *Growing Up Online*, and view videos, including a clip from the award-winning film *Adina's Deck* at **www.nea.org/ref?cyberbullying**.

National Teacher Day IS MAY 6

Give yourself a pat on the back for all that you do for schools and students. **www.nea.org/ref?teacherday**



What's the Dish?

Teacher pay experiments, hate crimes in school, controversial classroom hip-hop songs—find it all on our news blog at
www.nea.org/ref?ednotes

More blogs from nea.org:

WORKS4ME
Classroom ideas and strategies
www.nea.org/ref?works4me

NCLB UPDATES
It's time for a change.
www.nclbchange.wordpress.com

POLL

How many of your students regularly attend an after-school program to improve their studies? Here's what nea.org visitors had to say:

None:	A few:	A lot:	All:
5%	19%	6%	70%

NOW YOU'RE TALKING

From the nea.org discussion boards:

"I RARELY USE textbooks...I prefer to lecture and discuss. I use the book as a starting point for my notes but supplement heavily off the Internet and other resources."

"I AM IN THE final stages of my student teaching experience and am frustrated that the [student teacher] is required to work full-time as a 'practicing teacher.' I have not had insurance for six months now, nor a paycheck. It is a crime that teaching does not pay much, but to begin a long and rewarding career in teaching with a massive debt is outrageous!"

JOIN YOUR COLLEAGUES IN A DISCUSSION AT www.nea.org/forums

BASEBALL: R. GINO SANTA MARIA; POLL: NATHAN HAM

Saying Goodbye to the Classroom

Wow! I just read "Why They Leave" (April 2008) and felt as if you had written the article about me! My husband, a seventh-grade social studies teacher, and I, a fifth-grade teacher, have just begun graduate work to change careers after over 20 years each of teaching. I no longer feel that I teach students. I am leaving because of the No Child Left Behind law (NCLB) and lack of support from my district on issues regarding discipline, parents, and meaningful staff development, as well as lack of respect for education and teachers from far too many parents. I am still grieving leaving the classroom. But my career change will still allow me to work with students in a proper environment.

KRISTIN BUNDE
Lincoln, Nebraska

As I read "Why They Leave," I kept saying, "me too" or "I feel the same way." Teaching was what I was meant to do, but on day seven of my first year, I decided I was going to quit. My mentor told me to take it one day at a time and it would get better. For the next 173 days, I was miserable. I was scared for my safety at my urban middle school. I was disrespected day in and day out. Now at a different school, the lack of importance of an education is disheartening, and the laziness of students is exhausting. If the trend continues, how long can I teach? What will make the majority of us stay? If good teachers don't want to teach, who will teach our children?

MEGAN LENTZ
Thomasville, North Carolina

I just have to completely and sadly agree with all the reasons teachers leave the profession. I wanted to add, however, that teachers are not the only ones getting the short end of the stick. I am a high school counselor and we are absolutely overwhelmed with the NCLB testing responsibilities. We just want to do the job we were hired to do—counsel kids. I guess the frustration of NCLB, among many other factors, influences the retention of most professionals in the teaching profession, from principal to teacher. I will begin my 20th year next year and I plan on sticking around for another 10 years. It's what I love and I can't imagine doing anything else. Thanks for the great article.

DEBBIE STANCHAK
Jacksonville, Arkansas

DON'T TRIVIALIZE GANG CULTURE

Your article about knowing the signs for identifying gang-bangers is ridiculous and hyperbolic at best. ("In a Gangster's Paradise," April 2008) The fact that you are attempting to decode speech patterns and fashion in such simplistic terms merely highlights many teachers' inability to comprehend modern students' experiences and lives. This article perpetuates fear and suspicion, and makes no attempt to understand the complex range of students' relationship to urban culture, hip-hop music, and gang culture. It is through guidance and understanding that we can effectively educate all students, even those who identify with urban or gang culture, not through simplistic labeling, punishment, and disingenuous analysis of their appearances and language.

DAREK BALL
Portland, Oregon

Thank you for the article on gangs in schools. I am witnessing a tremendous rise in the trends and crimes associated with gang culture at my school, and my warnings of its continued growth without an intervention are proving to be true. I appreciate your research and insight.

CHAD NEGENDANK
Knoxville, Tennessee

CORRECTIONS

Page 29 of the April issue contains an incorrect Web address to access the Test Your Gang IQ feature. The correct URL is www.nea.org/ref?gangs. Also, an article on adopted students (March 2008) referenced an incorrect publication date for an *Adoptive Families* magazine article. The article was published in 2002, not 2007.

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LET'S TALK

Share your ideas, comments, and opinions with *NEA Today* in one of four ways. By Mail: Write to Letters, *NEA Today*, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036 On the Web: Go to www.nea.org/neatoday, click on "Feedback," and fill in the "Letter to the Editor" section By e-mail: Write to neatoday@nea.org By Fax: (202) 822-7206

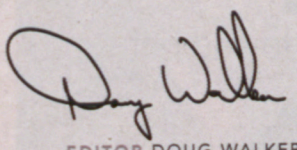
Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

GET OFF THE SIDELINES

Politics in our great country has, unfortunately, devolved into a spectator sport. Our cover story, however, profiles a number of your colleagues who understand that they can have a say in policies that regulate their classrooms, workplaces, and communities by helping select the policy*makers*. They're volunteering time and finding other ways to support candidates of their choice at various levels of government from both major political parties. Some are active in ballot initiative campaigns as well.

We urge you to go and do likewise. In one of the most important, and surely one of the most interesting, national elections in recent memory, each of us has an opportunity to send to office friends of public education who, regardless of party affiliation, will look out for the interests of our colleagues and the students we serve.

I know it seems the campaign season will never end. But getting out and making a difference may make it pass much faster.



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OUR VISION

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OUR CORE VALUES

These principles guide our work and define our mission:

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY. We believe public education is the gateway to opportunity. All students have the human and civil right to a quality public education that develops their potential, independence, and character.

A JUST SOCIETY. We believe public education is vital to building respect for the worth, dignity, and equality of every individual in our diverse society.

DEMOCRACY. We believe public education is the cornerstone of our republic. Public education provides individuals with the skills to be involved, informed, and engaged in our representative democracy.

PROFESSIONALISM. We believe that the expertise and judgment of education professionals are critical to student success. We maintain the highest professional standards, and we expect the status, compensation, and respect due all professionals.

PARTNERSHIP. We believe partnerships with parents, families, communities, and other stakeholders are essential to quality public education and student success.

COLLECTIVE ACTION. We believe individuals are strengthened when they work together for the common good. As education professionals, we improve both our professional status and the quality of public education when we unite and advocate collectively.

THE GOOD FIGHT

For those of you who have had the opportunity to visit my office in Washington, you may have noticed a photo of a bill signing hanging on the wall by the door. It is a very special photo for me because it represents a major accomplishment in my career as an advocate for public school educators.

I pioneered a campaign as president of the Illinois Education Association that led to the passage of the state's first mandatory and comprehensive collective bargaining law. That photo captures the hard work and tireless efforts to improve the professional lives of Illinois' public school employees.

As president of the National Education Association, I have brought the same tenacity and passion. I was elected NEA president in the same year that No Child Left Behind was enacted, and there was a groundswell of acclaim for this legislation. We supported the law's worthy goals but expressed concerns from the start that its one-size-fits-all approach was misguided and ill-advised. Six years later, NEA's early concerns about the legislation have been validated as NCLB's many policy flaws and unintended consequences have become all too apparent. The Administration now recognizes that the law must be fixed—and many of the changes have come as a result of our members speaking out on the changes that are needed.

When I came into office in 2002, I aspired for NEA to be everywhere—in the supermarkets, the barbershops, the beauty shops—in every corner of every community. We made outreach to minority communities a priority during my tenure because for NEA and public education to remain strong we must acknowledge our changing demographics and embrace diversity. Nearly half of the nation's children under five are racial or ethnic minorities, so the sweeping tide of change is inevitable. NEA must work collaboratively with ethnic minority communities to close the gaps in student achievement, improve the quality of their schools, and ensure all children the education they need and deserve.

When you elected me president, NEA had about 2.7 million members, and the conventional wisdom was that our membership would decline. Yet a renewed emphasis on membership became our charge—I asked you to "bring me some members" and you answered the call. Today, we are 3.2 million strong, making us the largest labor organization in the nation.

But NEA is special not just because of our size. We are special because of our organizational purpose, which is exemplified by a landmark vision, mission, and values adopted in 2006. We are millions of voices but we have one message: the belief that every child, regardless of family income or place of residence, deserves a quality education. We are 14,000 local affiliates but we share one mission.

We are passionate about education because we have all seen how the joy of learning can inspire a child and make a lasting difference in his or her life. I have traveled the globe as vice president of Education International and have listened to many stories of pain and triumph in the fight for public education. Educators around the world share many common challenges, and I have used the opportunity to raise awareness globally of the need for better professional development, more public/private partnerships, and improved working conditions for teachers and education support professionals. The basic right to great public schools doesn't end at our borders. As an organization, NEA can't afford to simply ignore the global struggle to preserve public education.

> "We are the right people, in the right places, at the right time. And we have the right ideas for public education."
>
> —Reg Weaver

For over 30 years, I have bared my soul in the fight for quality public schools and that fight must continue. We must fight for the resources to close achievement gaps, reduce dropout rates, and modernize crumbling schools. We must fight for educators who are underpaid and undervalued. And we must fight to always have educators at the table so education reforms are done with us, not to us.

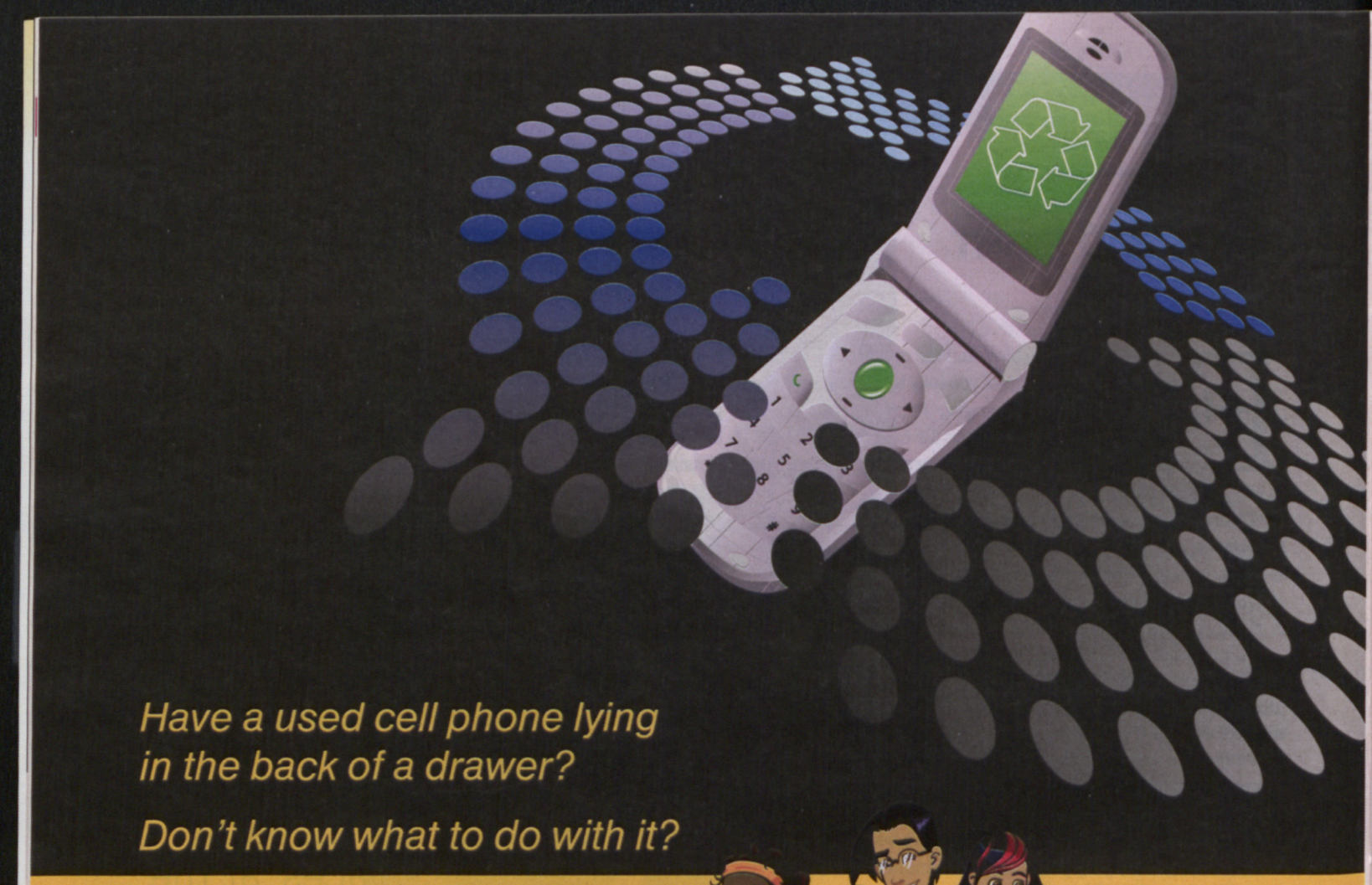
We have never substituted words for action. We have stood together in the midst of the mightiest storms. I still believe, as I said six years ago, that we are the right people, in the right places, at the right time. And we have the right ideas for public education.

Team NEA, I bid you strong resolve and a renewal of your strength and zeal for advancing the interests of educators and the children of America. Thanks for all you do! It has been an honor to serve with you.

Reg Weaver

NEA PRESIDENT REG WEAVER

PHOTO: SANDY SCHAEFFER



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New Arenas for Title IX?

It's a proven winner in sports but there's more to do.

LIKE MANY successful 35-year-olds, Title IX—the federal law that bans sex discrimination in public schools—is ready for fresh challenges.

In its youth, Title IX smashed gender barriers in sports. In 1972, before the law, one girl in 27 played high school sports. Today, it's one in 2.5. (Among boys, the rate has been steady at roughly one in two.)

"Girls were playing half-court basketball"—when they could get in the gym at all, recalls Norma De La Rosa, an El Paso school basketball official who graduated from college in 1976. Things have changed since then, although old attitudes still get in the way: "I've had coaches tell me they didn't think it was a woman's place to be on the court with their boys."

So what now? Women in sports say there's much more to do to achieve gender equality there. But some Title IX fans are hoping that the law can be used in new ways as well. At a congressional hearing last fall, there was much talk of tackling the obstacles that keep women out of technical fields, like computer engineering.

The Higher Education Act now working its way through Congress calls for monitoring university hiring in these fields and could lay the groundwork for future Title IX action. To lend your support to the Higher Education Act, go to www.nea.org/lac.

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POLE VAULTER: MASTERFILE, COMPUTERS: GEORGE DOYLE

On the Outs With Uncle Sam

WHEN IT COMES to a $200 pair of jeans, parents may not care if their kids are "in" or "out." But when it comes to the military wanting to recruit their children during wartime, they are very likely to care about the in or out distinction.

The military has an open door now, thanks to an "opt out" provision in the No Child Left Behind law (NCLB) that requires parents to say no to the release of their child's contact information to recruiters. But U.S. Rep. Mike Honda's (D-CA) Student Privacy Protection Act, which NEA actively supports, would amend the law to require parents to pen written consent for the release of their child's contact information instead.

Earlier this year, NEA lobbyists won assurances from the House education committee's chairman, George Miller (D-CA), that Honda's bill would be included as an amendment to a revised NCLB. For updates on its status, go to www.nea.org/lac.

$70,900,0

The amount of **MONEY PROMISED** by the federal government for No Child Left Behind programs between 2002 and 2008, but **NEVER DELIVERED.**

SOURCE: NEA

A Lunch with Longevity

EDITH QUIMBY started off in the kitchen inadvertently, as a little girl who delivered her father's lunch pail. That was more than 80 years ago.

Now she works as a lunch lady at the Hamilton School in North Kingstown, Rhode Island—a job that she has held for 46 years.

Every morning, Quimby arrives at the school at dawn. "I'm up every morning at 4," she told *The Providence Journal*. "[Otherwise] You miss the best part of the day."

Some things have changed over the years—these days she'll sometimes catch kids tossing away their uneaten food and shakes her head in disdain. "I was brought up to eat everything, and glad to get it." But one thing is certain—she has no plans to retire. "I'm staying here," she said.

—RANEE PATEL

UNCLE SAM: HEADHUNTERS; LUNCH TRAY: ROBERT GUBBINS; EDITH QUIMBY: STEVE SYDLOWSKI/PROVIDENCE JOURNAL; IMAGE ASSEMBLY: GROFF CREATIVE, INC.

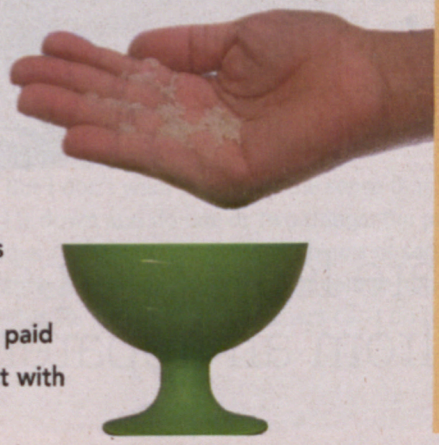
It Matters if You're Male

JUST ONE YEAR with a female teacher would close completely the gender gap for 13-year-old girls in math, and cut the science gap by half, while a year with a male reading teacher would significantly boost the reading scores of boys, according to a National Bureau of Economic Research paper that examines the consequences of gender behind the teacher's desk. Its author suggests assigning female teachers to girls and males to boys—but, we ask, where would he find all these male teachers? Their numbers reached a 40-year low this year.

000,000

WHAT DOES COMPASSION MEAN?

A new Web site, designed by an Indiana parent with an SAT-ready son, doesn't just provide vocabulary quizzes for kids. Every time a player gets an answer right, it also donates 20 grains of rice to the U.N. World Food Program. So far, the site's advertisers have paid for more than 24 billion grains. Check it out with your students at www.freerice.com.



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NCLB NEWS FLASH!

The Secretary of Education has decided that a school that keeps missing one No Child Left Behind target doesn't need to be treated as if it missed, say, 37 targets.

At least, not if that school is in one of 10 states in a pilot program announced in March. Other states must shut or drastically change schools that persistently miss even one target, but the lucky 10 will not have to.

"This is good, something we've been advocating," but much more needs to be done, said NEA President Reg Weaver.

The new policy leaves intact the law's rigid test score focus. It also treats schools with many minority and low-income children more harshly than richer, Whiter schools. In the Alice-in-Wonderland world of NCLB, those lucky schools pass with scores that would flunk a diverse school.

Here's why: if they have only a few English Language Learners, schools don't have to meet the state test score goal, but if there are many, they do. And the same goes for other subgroups. (For more, go to www.nea.org/lac.)

Have a great idea?

Send it by mail: *NEA Today*
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Washington, DC 20036

Send it by e-mail:
neatoday@nea.org

BOY IN CLASSROOM: IMAGE SOURCE BLACK, IMAGE ASSEMBLY: GROFF CREATIVE, INC.; HANDFUL OF RICE: ELDER VIEIRA SALLES

The Most Terrifying Video You'll Ever See

OREGON SCIENCE TEACHER Greg Craven became an Internet sensation when his YouTube video on climate change—"The Most Terrifying Video You'll Ever See"—went viral last summer.

Millions viewed it and thousands left comments, prompting Craven to spend his entire summer on part two. The result, "How It All Ends," was what Craven calls his "Magnum Opus and midlife crisis and nervous breakdown."

"Global climate change is one of the driving forces of my teaching career," says Craven. And now, with a global classroom, he's sounding the alarm to millions of people around the world.

"It's amazing how one schmo can post a video, and days later five million people can watch it—it starts with a few, and grows exponentially in a nonlinear way," Craven says. "Climate change shares that characteristic. When you cross a tipping point, it causes extreme agitation."

Ready for a good scare? Go to www.nea.org/ref?craven.

Even on your worst day…

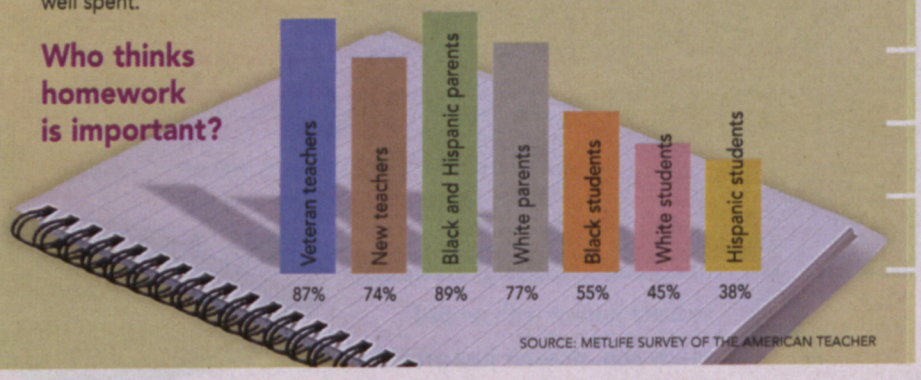
YOU'VE NEVER been trapped in the toilet, right? Late last year, a retired Scottish schoolteacher spent nearly four days stuck inside the loo at a little-used sports clubhouse, when the door jammed and the handle fell off. He kept warm by dipping his feet in hot water. "At least there was a toilet to use," he told Reuters. "The only thing I regret is not getting trapped behind the bar."

VITAL STATS

Do Your Homework!

Despite recent media attention around "overwhelming" amounts of homework, about 85 percent of parents say their children get just the right amount of homework—or too little, according to a recent MetLife Survey of the American Teacher. The survey also found that teachers spend an average of 8.5 hours per week on homework (good grief!) while most students report at least 30 minutes a day. What's less clear is whether the kids think it's time well spent.

Who thinks homework is important?



SOURCE: METLIFE SURVEY OF THE AMERICAN TEACHER

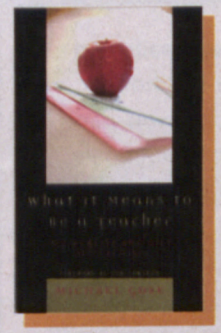
"Parents are feeling hopeless, distraught, worried, stemming from an apparent loss of control."

—CHRISSY COLEY, A PRIVATE CONSULTANT TO COLLEGES "HELICOPTER PARENTS" TO ANXIOUSLY HOVER

EARTH: STEPHEN GIRIMONT; POLAR BEAR: ROSS STRACHAN; COMPUTER: IMAGE SOURCE PINK; NOTEPAD: LUMINOUSLENS

Book Focus

SUMMER READING



Finally, a book about teaching that tells it how it is. Michael Gose is a teacher who has made mistakes—and magic—like all of you. There's the time he attempts to teach *The Owl and the Pussy Cat* to a classroom of teenage boys. (A mistake.) And the time he saves a would-be dropout by showing up at his house every morning at 5:30. (The magic.) He knows what it's like to wait desperately for a bathroom break. He knows what it's like to wait desperately for a paycheck.

In his foreword, former NEA Executive Director Don Cameron writes, "In this excellent book, *What It Means to Be a Teacher*...Gose clearly and cleverly conveys to the reader what every good teacher knows: that a meaningful learning experience for the student(s) is also a meaningful learning experience for the teacher."

But the book itself is a great learning experience for those who should walk a mile in your shoes. We particularly love Gose's chapter on teaching conditions, and would like to send it to the school board members who mutter about summer vacations: "How would you like to work in a 900-square-foot office with at least 30 other people? Do you know any other job that typically requires one to make 1,200 decisions a day? Would you want to go to school that long to work for that pay?" The answers could inform the popular debate on teacher compensation.

Q&A

Patricia Gándara

LEADING RESEARCHER ON LATINO STUDENTS

Gándara is co-director of The Civil Rights Project Proyecto Derechos Civiles at the University of California Los Angeles. Her latest book, *The Latino Education Crisis*, is due out later this year.

What is the "crisis" in Latino education?
For other groups—Whites, African-Americans, Asians—the percentage getting college degrees is up significantly. For Latinos, we've stalled for 30 years. College-going has become the new job threshold. In some states, Latinos will soon be the majority of the workforce but they are not prepared to fill the jobs. In these states, economic decline is projected by 2020.

We often hear of immigrants who learn English fast and join the mainstream. Why isn't that happening with many Latino immigrants?
When children come from countries where they've been well educated, they do well. But many Latino immigrants have had little or no education.

At least three quarters of Latino children are native-born, but they live in increasingly segregated communities. Even when they speak some English, it may not be standard English because of that isolation.

Can we just wait until they get used to American schools and society?
First and second generation immigrant children often outperform third generation children on some measures like math scores and aspirations. When people first come to this country, they have "immigrant optimism." The children go to school hopeful about the possibilities open to them. But when there is no real social mobility, that hopefulness diminishes. So we have to grab kids early and convert the expectations to reality.

If I teach a lot of Latino children and I don't speak Spanish, what can I do?
The school needs to partner you with teachers who do, or employ other people from the community to help. There has to be somebody the parents can feel comfortable with.

The school can organize events for parents. Involve community people in planning them. Provide child care. Ask parents to bring food to share, so they are contributing. Have reading nights when parents come in and read to kids in the parents' language. In high school, parents need to be informed about what post-high school education looks like, and what their kids will need.

But I don't want to convey the sense that if only teachers would buckle down and do one or two things, the problems could be solved. Teachers cannot solve all the problems of segregation and community isolation. I don't mean give up, of course not. We need to do everything possible for the child. But teachers can't do it alone.

and frustrated

AND UNIVERSITIES, ABOUT THE PROPENSITY OF
DURING THE SPRING SEMESTER OF COLLEGE.

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EQUAL HOUSING LENDER

HFNT0508

leading the way

During his presidency, **Reg Weaver** has traveled the country advocating for public education (left) and visited schoolchildren around the world, including students in Ghana (below).

REG WEAVER'S SIX YEARS

His legacy: A stronger NEA

When Reg Weaver took office nearly six years ago, the No Child Left Behind law had just passed with the support of a broad bipartisan majority, including many friends of public schools who didn't understand what it would mean in the classroom.

Today, there's a growing consensus that it needs major changes. That transformation is due in no small part to the nationwide campaign by educators to show the country what this 1,100-page law actually means in real life. NEA, under Reg Weaver's leadership, is pushing a positive agenda for overhauling the law with grassroots lobbying by members throughout the country.

This broad, member-participation approach has marked his presidency.

"We are more than one out of every 100 Americans, and we live in every congressional district in the country," Weaver likes to remind audiences. And he stresses the right and the duty of educators to demand respect for themselves and their work: "If they're going to reform schools, they need to do that with us, not to us."

Weaver has spent much of his tenure out in the school districts, meeting thousands of members in visits to over 800 local Associations, inspiring them to stand tall and make their voices heard in Washington, in the state capitals, and the school board chambers.

He put NEA and its work before the public as never before with a more powerful and focused public relations program that reached all media, big and small, new and traditional.

He led successful counterattacks against efforts to undermine America's public schools with tax-funded vouchers.

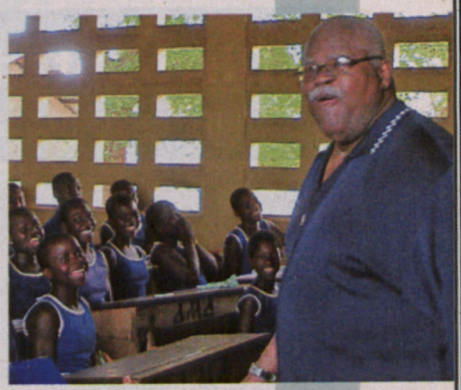
Weaver brought new respect to the hundreds of thousands of education support professionals who are part of NEA and who contribute both to the education of their students and the strength of the Association.

Six years ago, NEA had 2.7 million members but many observers predicted a gradual decline. Weaver would not accept that. He reinvigorated organizing efforts, launching a drive that has so far brought another half million members into NEA and continues unabated.

Weaver also forged a strong alliance with America's minority communities to work toward closing the achievement gaps that hold down many minority children. Major minority organizations have formed a united front with NEA, fighting for great public schools for every child. Reg points out that nearly half of children under five in America are members of racial or ethnic minorities.

During the past few years, Weaver led an effort to refocus the work of NEA around a new vision, mission, and core values document, getting input from members at meetings around the country so that it truly reflected a consensus of the Association. It was passed overwhelmingly by the 2006 Representative Assembly, NEA's top decision-making body.

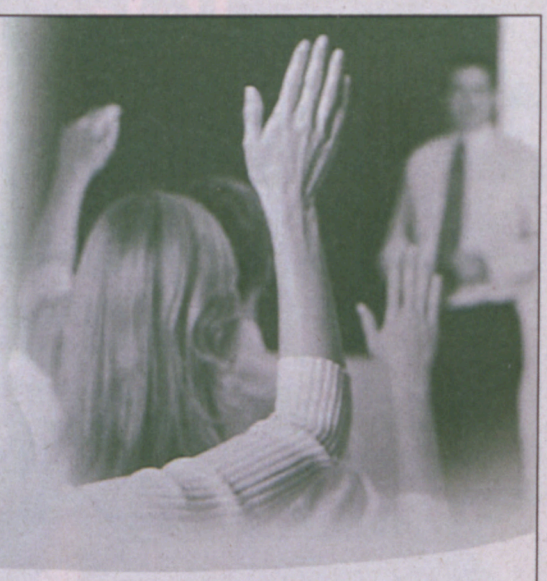
Besides the NCLB campaigns and the mission-vision-core values effort, Weaver also found time and energy to take NEA's Great Public Schools campaign worldwide as vice president of Education International. Though the languages are different, he found many of the battles going on—for professional respect and pay, adequate school funding, and a commitment to educate all children, regardless of gender, ethnic group, or wealth—are the same.



NEA limits presidents to two three-year terms, so Weaver will step down this summer, leaving the organization larger, stronger, and more effective. "We are millions of voices," he says, but we have one message: the belief that every child, regardless of family income or place of residence, deserves a quality education."

PHOTOS TOP: SACRAMENTO BEE/FLORENCE LOW; BOTTOM: CYNTHIA SWANN

IF YOU WANT TO TEACH, LEARN TO REACH.



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AHNT 0508

COOKING UP A CAMPAIGN

Inspired by their peers, Washington ESPs fight for living wages.

BY JOHN ROSALES

What's the recipe for a successful living wage campaign? A dollop of funding, a dash of leadership, and lots of willing members. In 2002, the Ithaca Paraprofessionals Association in New York made bargaining history when they combined these ingredients to launch a wage campaign that ultimately gave paras on the low end of the pay scale an immediate 38 percent increase, raised starting pay by 50 percent by the end of the three-year contract, and increased membership in their bargaining unit to 100 percent.

Since Ithaca, public school employees across the country have scraped together funding, sponsored leadership training, and inspired members to start living wage campaigns. From Atlanta and Birmingham to Seneca Valley, Pennsylvania; Oshkosh, Wisconsin; Fayette County, Kentucky; and Burlington, Vermont—education support professionals (ESPs) have launched campaigns.

Generally, a living wage means sufficient compensation to pay for basic necessities without government, community, or other financial assistance. A living wage campaign is a grassroots effort by employees to win enough pay to cover basic items such as rent, food, utilities, taxes, and transportation.

Inspired by campaigns across the country, Washington State ESPs decided to try out the recipe for themselves. "We thought, if [Ithaca] can do it, we can do it," says secretary Debby Chandler, ESP chair of the Spokane Education Association.

To explore the possibility, Chandler met with Jeff Wahlquist, the ESP state coordinator with the Washington Education Association (WEA).

Chandler and Wahlquist knew from attending workshops that living wage campaigns need a core group of members to strategize and research how ESP earnings compare to state living wage figures.

"We already knew ESPs weren't making a living wage because so many are on food stamps," Wahlquist says. "We have members who work a second job to make ends meet, and ESP parents whose kids are on the free and reduced lunch program."

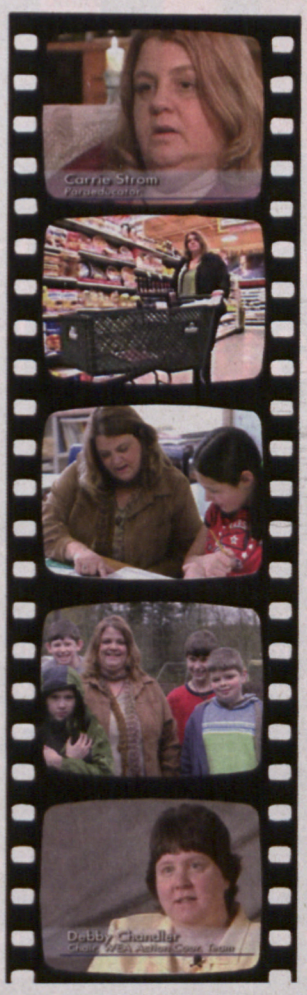
Convinced of the need for a campaign, Chandler knew the perfect group to lead the charge: the 26-member ESP Action Coordinating Team (ACT).

"We already had this mechanism in place," says Chandler, chair of the 20-year-old organization. ACT comprises WEA ESP board members and other ESP leaders from across the state.

In October 2006, the group devised a plan to raise funds to start three wage campaigns simultaneously in different geographic areas, and one month later ACT received a $20,000 NEA grant for this purpose. ACT then received $5,000 from WEA to conduct three daylong training conferences across the state that would inform members about the commitment needed for a campaign. The conferences were held between January and March 2007.

"People went home and talked it up," says Chandler.

Wage campaigns must involve the "engagement of members and potential members to help them see the value of collective action," says Bill Raabe, NEA director of Collective Bargaining and Member Advocacy.



Paraprofessional **Carrie Strom** (left) is featured in a video produced by WEA to help explain the realities of earning less than a living wage. Strom runs out of money midway through each month. "There are so many Carries in the world," says **Debby Chandler** (at bottom).

"Winning a wage increase is essential, but it's not enough," he says. "These campaigns should help members discover that they have the ability to improve their work lives through grassroots organizing."

Last summer, delegates to the WEA Representative Assembly awarded ACT $100,000 to stage three "lighthouse" campaigns. Raabe says more and more Associations are conducting statewide campaigns simultaneously through three or four lighthouse locals.

Washington's three locals— the Bainbridge Island ESP Association, Lake Washington ESPs, and Yakima Association of Paraeducators—span different regions of the state.

All three are currently at the internal organizing stage of their campaigns, which are being helped by Dan Cuomo, a former Ithaca living wage campaign organizer now based in Olympia.

As the campaigns progress, Chandler is expecting "some major wins" in 2009–10. She also hopes to give up her second job as a hotel bartender once she starts earning a living wage.

nea.org **FOR MORE ON WEA'S VIDEO AND ON LIVING WAGE CAMPAIGNS, SEE WWW.NEA.ORG/REF?MAYESP.**

VIDEO PHOTOS: DALE FOLKERTS

BATTER UP!

It's time to hit the campaign trail with Team NEA.

BY MARY ELLEN FLANNERY AND CYNTHIA KOPKOWSKI

Tired of fighting again and again when your district wants to privatize your job? Worried that with all the rising costs, your health insurance is about to exacerbate your migraines rather than help relieve them? What if an hour a week this summer, or heck, even 30 minutes, could go a long way to alleviating the stresses that come with being an education support professional?

Volunteering in the political process can pay tremendous dividends when it comes to the issues that directly affect your professional and personal life. If you think a living wage should be a right and not a privilege, then call voters and tell them about a school board candidate who agrees with you. If you're a paraprofessional who can't stomach the thought of having to buy your own supplies for the classroom, then knock on a few doors for a congressional candidate who understands the damage that underfunding schools does.

"If you really do want to make a difference for your students, you have to go where the decisions are made," says NEA Vice President Dennis Van Roekel, who often talks with educators about the importance of getting off the political sidelines. That means joining fellow Association members at the phone banks, on door-to-door tours, and on cyberlobbying campaigns that will be springing up in nearly every city and town this summer in advance of the November election. You don't have to go far and you don't need to be a political junkie or trained pollster, just someone who wants to make a difference for students.

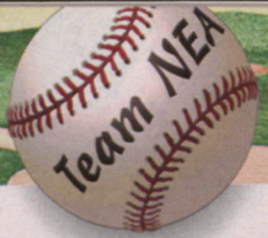
"Action, or lack of action, impacts [educators'] ability to have good working conditions, their ability to have sound discipline policies, their ability to have in-service professional development activities," says NEA President Reg Weaver. What happens with your job begins in the council chamber, the school board meeting room, the state house, the U.S. Capitol, and the White House. "Every decision is a political decision," says Weaver. "We should no longer accept people making decisions for us, about us, and without us."

We know finding time to do even a little campaigning can seem daunting, because contrary to popular myth, educators do not all spend the summer lounging poolside. There are second or even third jobs to work and professional development training sessions to attend. But dedicating time to the campaigns of pro-public education candidates is crucial to improve your and your students' lives.

Ohio maintenance electrician Jimmie Tipton says he'll be "doing a little bit of everything this summer," for the candidates and ballot initiatives he supports, and he won't mind giving up his free time. "There's nothing I'll be missing out on, because campaigning is important," says Tipton. "A lot of people have no idea how important."

Meet Tipton and several other NEA members who do, and learn why they need you on their team.

GRASS PHOTO: PAUL BRENNAN; DIAMOND PHOTO: MIKE FLIPPO; BASEBALL: R. GINO SANTA MARIA



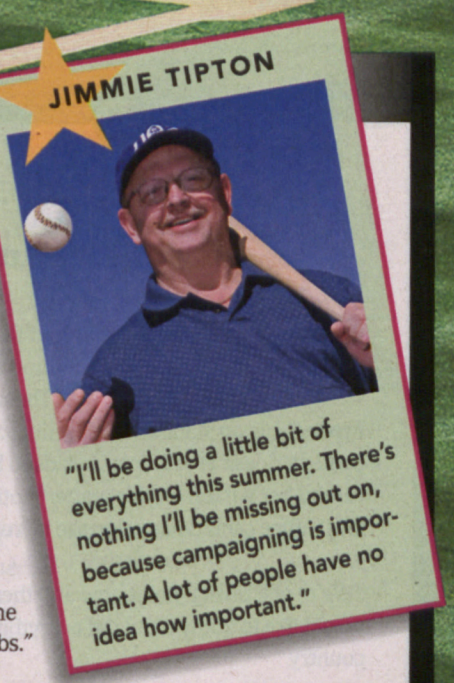
NAME: **Jimmie Tipton**
HOMETOWN: **Germantown, Ohio** AGE: **52**
POSITION: **Maintenance electrician**

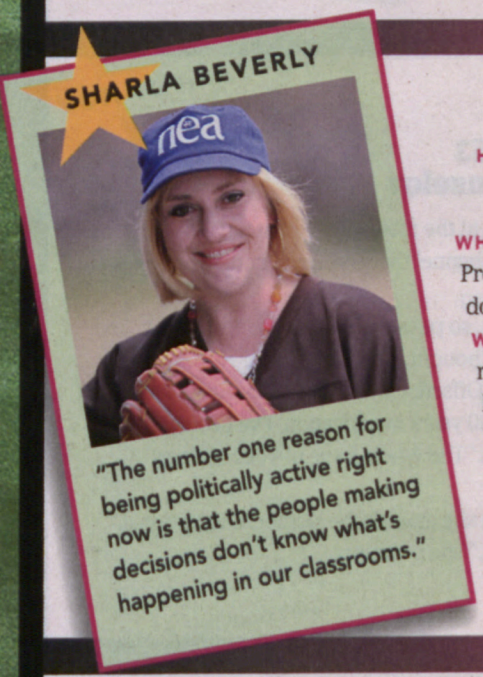
HOW HE'LL SPEND THE SUMMER: Volunteering for whichever candidate is most genuinely pro-public education. The card-carrying Republican doesn't mind crossing party lines for the best candidate to help public schools. He did it in 2006, campaigning and serving as a precinct captain for Democratic candidate Ted Strickland in his successful bid for the governor's mansion. This summer, Tipton will canvass and phone bank, as well as attend rallies to pass out literature.

HOW HE FIRST GOT INVOLVED: Quite simply, because someone (a campaign worker) asked him.

WHAT MOTIVATES HIM TO CAMPAIGN: The impact of the No Child Left Behind law (NCLB) on public schools rankles Tipton. "These are unfunded mandates by the government that cost schools millions of dollars."

WHAT HE WANTS YOU TO KNOW: Volunteering to campaign is crucial. "Especially for the younger educators who haven't been around that long, the way they vote and get involved is going to determine how their jobs play out in the future," says Tipton. "It's all about educating the kids and protecting your jobs."


JIMMIE TIPTON
"I'll be doing a little bit of everything this summer. There's nothing I'll be missing out on, because campaigning is important. A lot of people have no idea how important."


SHARLA BEVERLY
"The number one reason for being politically active right now is that the people making decisions don't know what's happening in our classrooms."

NAME: **Sharla Beverly**
HOMETOWN: **Salt Lake City, Utah** AGE: **36**
POSITION: **Second-grade teacher**

WHAT SHE WANTS YOU TO KNOW: "I'm feeling NCLB big time. We didn't make [Adequate Yearly Progress] and our administration is coming down on us. 'Let's see your lesson plans. What are you doing every 15 minutes?' My urgency is this presidential campaign and getting that changed."

WHAT SHE WANTS THE CANDIDATES TO KNOW: "We need ways to prove we're making gains—realistic gains. Obviously, if you're saying that everybody has to be on grade level by 2014… are you kidding me? I have a student, he's a refugee from Africa and he's never even been to school before, and he's supposed to be on grade level?!"

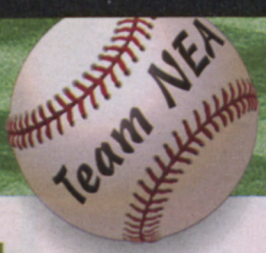
HOW SHE'LL SPEND HER SUMMER: Beverly, who is unaffiliated with a party, has a long-standing, friendly competition with her younger sister, Janalyn Duersch, a Republican teacher. Who can win more voters for public education? They like to volunteer to phone-bank. "You can just feel the energy," Beverly says. "And my sister is right there next to me!"

NAME: **Carolyn Abeyta**
HOMETOWN: **Veguita, New Mexico** AGE: **32**
POSITION: **Second-grade teacher**

HERE'S WHAT SHE WANTS YOU TO KNOW: "Ten years ago, I started out making $22,000. I was fortunate I was married! Otherwise I couldn't have made it. Now I earn $45,000—it's more than doubled in 10 years due to wonderful state legislators. I know our campaign work, phone-banking, letting our members know who will support our education issues, it does make a difference."

HERE'S WHAT SHE WANTS THE CANDIDATES TO KNOW: "No Child Left Behind would be my biggest issue right now. We call it Leave No Child Standing. It's unbelievable the pressure that these kids are under—and the pressure we're under!" And, of course, her new English Language Learners have very specific struggles in meeting the grade-level language demands of NCLB.

HOW SHE'LL SPEND HER SUMMER: She'll be volunteering to talk up a pro-public education presidential candidate in both English and Spanish language calls, helping to get the Hispanic vote to the polls. And when Abeyta rings, you might as well simply say, "OK. Just give me the candidate's name," because her phone-banking skills are just that good.



NAME: **Michelle Menard**
HOMETOWN: **Las Vegas, Nevada** AGE: **26**
POSITION: **Third-grade teacher**

HOW SHE'LL SPEND THE SUMMER: Volunteering to ring up those phones and knocking on doors to hand out fliers for her preferred Democratic presidential nominee. (In March, she served as a delegate to the Clark County Democratic Convention, after attending her local caucus.)

WHY SHE'S GETTING ACTIVE: The negatives of NCLB are too much to bear, says Menard. "The hyper-focus on standardized testing, and on reading and math skills to the exclusion of all other content, doesn't really inspire kids to be curious." That the Democratic presidential contenders want to lend her a hand on this matter motivates her to lend them a hand. Also, Menard is insisting that local office candidates prioritize increased education funding before they win her vote or help.

WHY SHE WON'T MISS HER USUAL SUMMER TRAVEL to places like Morocco and South America: "We're at a pivotal point now and there are a lot of grave issues we need to address," says Menard. "I would like to know that I did everything I could to make things turn out in a way that's good for this country."

CAMILLE TAYLOR
"People are making decisions for me and my fellow co-workers, and if we don't have any input, we'll get what we get."

NAME: **Camille Taylor**
HOMETOWN: **Bloomington, Illinois** AGE: **53**
POSITION: **High school guidance counselor**

HERE'S WHAT SHE WANTS YOU TO KNOW: "You have to be at the table if you want anything to happen. As much as I detest the politics of politics, that's the channel that change occurs through—whether it's at the school board level or Congress."

WHAT FIRES HER UP: "I'm four years away from retirement, so pension issues are huge for me. I do have a spouse and, if something happened to him, I always thought I'd be eligible for Social Security. Come to find out [because of the Government Pension Offset], I wouldn't be. It's very scary."

WHAT SHOULD FIRE YOU UP, TOO: "School funding! In 30 years in education, I've been in schools that are 'haves' and schools considered 'have-nots.' The whole issue of your address dictating what kind of resources you have is very unfair."

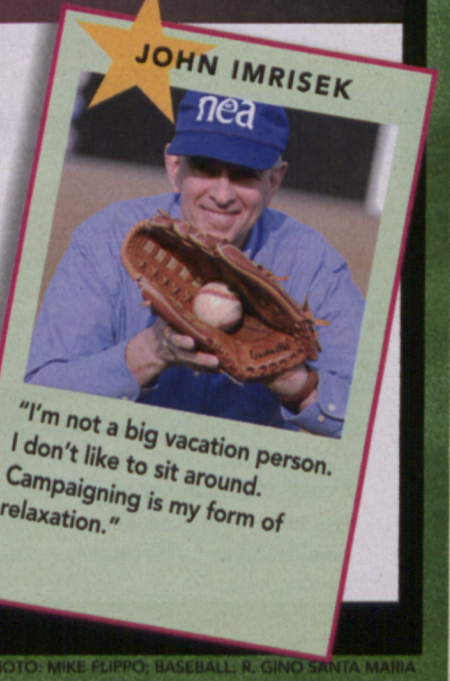
HER IDEA OF SUMMER FUN: The fun really starts when she attends the Democratic National Convention in August in Denver. "I know it'll be exciting," she promises.

NAME: **John Imrisek**
HOMETOWN: **Williamsport, Pennsylvania** AGE: **54**
POSITION: **High school math teacher**

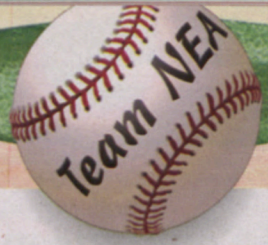
HOW HE'LL SPEND THE SUMMER: Coordinating the campaign of a state House hopeful in the 19 school districts that comprise the legislative district. Among other duties, Imrisek will go around the district, "kind of like a traveling salesman," putting up posters and offering people yard signs—an easy way for a rookie activist to get involved in his or her own area.

WHY HE'S GETTING ACTIVE: His candidate, a Republican, proved to be "a great friend of public education" during his time as mayor, and Imrisek wants to see that continue at the next level.

HOW HE CONNECTS CAMPAIGNING TO HIS JOB: Imrisek wants to ensure that anyone heading to Pennsylvania's legislature will push for adding teachers into the state employee retirement program. That would at least double the number of employees in the system, and that means monthly health care insurance costs could go down for teachers. "This kind of money is big for teachers," Imrisek says. "If you save this every month for five years it could mean a new car or the start of the education fund for your children."



PEOPLE PHOTOS FROM TOP: ISAAC BREKKEN; BEA MOSHER; MARK NANCE. GRASS PHOTO: PAUL BRENNAN; DIAMOND PHOTO: MIKE FLIPPO; BASEBALL: R. GINO SANTA MARIA

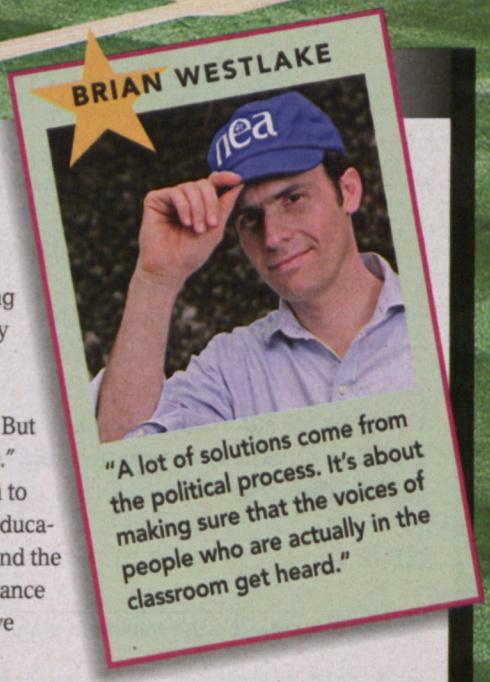


NAME: **Brian Westlake**
HOMETOWN: **Decatur, Georgia** AGE: **38**
POSITION: **High school economics teacher**

HOW HE'LL SPEND THE SUMMER: Soliciting candidates for the school board. That means finding and lobbying good candidates who are savvy about public education. He'll also be volunteering by making phone calls and writing letters supporting the candidates he wants to see elected.

THE GUITAR CAN WAIT: "I've been wanting to learn how to play and I won't be doing that" this summer, Westlake says. He also typically takes a vacation to France, where his wife's parents live. But that's out, too. "I don't feel like I'm sacrificing, though, because I feel this is something worthwhile."

WHY HE'S GETTING ACTIVE: Westlake is concerned that not enough policymakers pay attention to vocational education, especially for students who aren't interested in going to college. "So many educators understand the importance of this, but often there's a disconnect between the policymakers and the educators." Regardless of the issues, though, Westlake wants his students to recognize the importance of civic engagement. He talks "all the time" with his classes about the importance of being an active participant in political campaigns. "I think we need to be modeling the right behaviors," he says.


BRIAN WESTLAKE
nea
"A lot of solutions come from the political process. It's about making sure that the voices of people who are actually in the classroom get heard."

YVONNE BRADFORD
nea
"One person doing what she can, joining another person, joining another. That's where we have our strength as teachers, joining together to find a common voice."

NAME: **Yvonne Bradford**
HOMETOWN: **Thornton, Colorado** AGE: **47**
POSITION: **Elementary teacher**

HER IDEA OF SUMMER FUN: Saturday morning walks with her candidate—Joan Fitzgerald for U.S. House of Representatives—plus volunteering to write letters on her behalf. "She's done a lot of really positive things for public education and would be a great person to have in Washington."

HERE'S WHAT SHE WANTS YOU TO KNOW: "You can put somebody in there to help you or you can let somebody get elected who might not. There is a direct correlation between what lands in your lap in the classroom and who lands in the Legislature."

WHAT FIRES HER UP: "Our school leadership team would sit around the table and we were always strapped for money. [Lack of funding comes] directly from legislation at the state level. It has so much effect on class size, materials, and, of course, your retirement benefits."

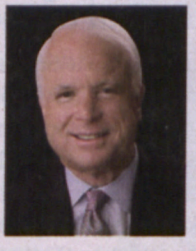
HERE'S WHAT SHE WANTS THE CANDIDATES TO KNOW: "Students are pulled out of art, music, and P.E. for extra reading and math support so that they can score higher on the test. They probably never thought of that when they were passing high-stakes testing laws."

Get in the Game!

WE'VE GOT A GREAT WAY TO GET YOUR SUMMER STARTED AT WWW.NEA.ORG/REF?GAME. YOU'LL FIND FUN WAYS TO DISPLAY YOUR STATUS AS AN ALL-STAR ACTIVIST (EVEN IF YOU'RE A ROOKIE) AND LEARN WHAT OTHER NEA MEMBERS ARE DOING ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL. LOOK FOR OUR GIVEAWAYS AND CHECK BACK OFTEN TO SEE IF YOU'RE ONE OF OUR FEATURED ACTIVISTS. AND VISIT THROUGHOUT THE SUMMER FOR OTHER NEW GOODIES!

2008 Presidential Candidate Comparison

They want your vote, but do they want what's best for public education? Here's a look at the candidates' positions on several key issues. For more details on the sources for each of their positions, head to www.nea.org/ref?candidates.



ISSUE	Hillary Clinton (D)	Barack Obama (D)	John McCain (R)	NEA
Supports increasing the minimum wage	Supports	Supports	Opposes	Supports
Pay teachers a starting salary of $40,000 and education support professionals a living wage	Supports	Supports	No public information available (Sen. McCain did not return NEA questionnaire)	Supports
Proposes universal health insurance coverage goal	Supports	Supports	Opposes	Supports
Overall approach to health care reform	Would establish new private/public health insurance programs based on the federal employees health plan and Medicare models and made available to every American.	Would establish new private/public health insurance programs based on the federal employees health plan and Medicare models and made available to every American.	Would provide tax credits to encourage Americans to buy health insurance on their own.	NEA supports a national health care policy that will mandate universal coverage with the highest quality health care at the lowest possible cost.
Supports health care reform built on current employer-based system	Supports	Supports	Opposes	Supports
Proposes that employers must cover employees' health insurance or pay a tax	Supports	Supports	Opposes	Supports
Privatize Social Security	Opposes	Opposes	Partially supports	Opposes
Private school vouchers	Opposes	Opposes	Supports	Opposes
No Child Left Behind (NCLB)	End	Reform	Tweak	Overhaul
Reduce class size	Supports	Supports	Opposes	Supports
Pay teachers based on student test scores, pay teachers based on other factors ("merit pay")	Opposes individual pay for test scores, but supports school-wide enhanced compensation	Opposes traditional pay for test scores, but supports some forms of enhanced compensation	Supports pay for test scores	Opposes pay for test scores, but supports some forms of enhanced compensation
Expand early childhood education	Supports	Supports	No public information available (Sen. McCain did not return NEA questionnaire)	Supports
Increase student aid for college (Pell Grants)	Supports	Supports	Opposes	Supports
Increase federal education funding	Supports	Supports	Opposes	Supports

Mary Szentesi's students use dance to show what happens when geometric shapes are flipped or moved.

DANCE OF THE TRAPEZOID

Educators use the power of the arts to teach math and science.

BY ALAIN JEHLEN

FOR CHARLENE ELLINGSON, THE EYE-OPENER WAS A PAINTING BY A HMONG GIRL WITH VERY LIMITED ENGLISH.

Ellingson, a biology teacher in Minneapolis, had taught her students about neurotransmitters and synapses and asked them to come in the next day with an illustration. She expected them to copy a diagram. Instead, this girl drew a metaphor: a soda machine with different types of soda pouring through tubes into cups, the way neurotransmitters pass through synapses.

"She really understood how [a synapse] works," says Ellingson. "She had constructed her own way of thinking about it. And I could see inside her thinking process. But I could never have gotten that from her in words."

These days, many schools are cutting arts to focus on the math and reading tested under the No Child Left Behind law, but some teachers are using the arts to help their students master academics. They say integrating arts into academic lessons helps students learn more deeply because they use more senses and different ways of thinking.

The arts can engage students' emotions, too. Unfortunately, the sharpest arts cutbacks have been in low-income schools where winning students over to the learning enterprise is often the most difficult.

Charlene Ellingson now regularly asks students to draw pictures that show analogies between biological phenomena and the world they're familiar with. Using this approach, she finds, students can't just regurgitate what they've heard in class. They make science concepts their own.

Her school, Patrick Henry High in North Minneapolis, has

PHOTO: ELLEN BANNER

"At first, I was really skeptical…But I've completely changed my mind. It's the best thing for them, it's so engaging." — Bertina Kelley

mostly Black and Hmong students, with a 75 percent low-income population.

"Some show up on the first day saying, 'I don't like science,'" says Ellingson. But when they draw, they get involved, learn observation skills, and think harder. Drawing also helps her involve students who would otherwise be wallflowers. "I want to hear the voices of all my kids, not just those who talk quickest," says Ellingson. "Some think out loud, but other kids want to process their thoughts before they're willing to talk about it. Drawing gives them the time they need."

Minneapolis has secured a grant to bring artists into schools to work with teachers, and Ellingson has used some of that money for an artist who taught her students drawing techniques.

Now she wants to branch out and use other arts: "I'm thinking of using dance and having my students physically act out the processes of cellular respiration."

Move like a polygon

Many teachers across the country are already using dance to teach academics, some in conjunction with professional dancers. In Tacoma, Washington, an art education group called Arts Impact has started an experiment to see whether dance and visual arts can help students get higher geometry scores on the state math test. The experiment involves nine low-income schools of which three, chosen randomly, are controls.

The other six include Wainwright Elementary, where Mary Szentesi's fourth-graders use their whole bodies and giant rubber bands to make polygons that slide and flip. They're learning what geometric transformations might feel like to a pentagon—if a pentagon could feel. "When they take tests, I can see them moving their arms the way we do when we dance, as they work on problems," Szentesi says.

At Birney Elementary School, third-grade teacher Bertina Kelley has found success with a similar movement approach to geometry. "You can ask them about all the attributes of a parallelogram and they've got it now," says Kelley. "For a third-grader, that's a lot."

"At first, I was really skeptical," she says. "Some of my kids have behavior problems. They're a tough group. They need stability and structure. I thought they might start running around and not be manageable. But I've completely changed my mind. It's the best thing for them, it's so engaging."

Artist-educator Debbie Gilbert worked with Szentesi and Kelley. But the plan is for teachers to use these dance techniques on their own after the experiment is over. So in the first lesson, Gilbert taught while the regular teacher mostly watched. The next lesson, Gilbert and the teacher co-taught. And the third time, the teacher took the lead with Gilbert supporting.

Posters and powers of 10

Like Kelley, math teacher Alykhan Boolani has picked a challenging place to work. Boolani teaches at the East Oakland (California) School of the Arts, which is 99 percent minority, 67 percent low-income. This small school is one of several created by carving up a much bigger high school. Despite the name, says Boolani, many School of the Arts students have no special interest in art; they're just kids who live nearby.

They're not much into math, either, he says. And on top of that, Boolani is a first-year teacher. You might think he'd focus on just getting the basics right. But with help from the school's art integration coach, Liz Harvey, Boolani has found that art can be the key to connecting his students with academics.

One example: The state test requires students to understand big numbers—millions, billions—and how powers of 10 can be used

Charlene Ellingson (left) has her students draw as a way to help them think about science. One student saw an analogy between nerve signals passing across a synapse and how people catch colds.

PHOTO: MARC WANVIG

Alykhan Boolani had his students paint posters about Iraq war spending as part of his teaching about big numbers and exponents.

to describe these numbers: 10^9 is a billion. Boolani decided to talk about real-world examples of giant numbers, like federal spending on Iraq versus spending on schools. Then his students made posters comparing the numbers they found in their research and hung them around the school to educate other students.

"I've noticed that when I teach something using direct instruction, my kids learn it, spit it back on the test, and get it out of their minds," he says. "But what they learn with art, they remember."

To teach the various types of triangles, he staged an architectural design competition for a hall of fame for women athletes. Competing student teams drew up plans for buildings that had to express motion and agility and use several types of triangles. "Now these kids know what an isosceles triangle is, and they won't forget it," he says.

Sines and seasons

His colleague Laravian Battle uses art to teach the traditionally dry subject of trigonometry. For example, sines and cosines (as everyone would remember if they had Battle for a teacher) are cyclical. She has her students think of other cycles and draw them—the seasons, the moon's phases, the cycle of violence.

Battle wants to learn to read music and play an instrument so she can bring music study into her classroom—"Music is all fractions. I could do great work with my pre-algebra students."

So is this the future of art education—as a tool for teaching the "core subjects"?

Public opinion polls show Americans value imagination and creativity, not just the more easily measured skills assessed on standardized tests. A recent poll (funded in part by NEA) found that most voters believe arts education is "essential" for developing the imagination and should be considered part of the basics.

But imagination is difficult to measure with multiple-choice questions or rubric-scored essays like those on state tests, so it's hard for arts educators to prove their worth.

"I love art. My students love art," says Bertina Kelley, the Tacoma third-grade teacher who uses dance to help teach geometry. "We shouldn't have to find an excuse for art. It's a shame, but that's reality right now."

But Debbie Gilbert, the dancer who works with Kelley, is grateful for any opening. "Any reason people will dance is good!" she says.

At the East Oakland School of the Arts, Liz Harvey says they're not just using art as a tool for teaching the "basics." They're integrating the arts throughout the curriculum, and that doesn't belittle their importance.

Aesthetic expression in the real world, she notes, is often part of a broader purpose, for example in architecture or poster design. The artistic dimension contributes emotional engagement, new perspectives, and enjoyment—just as it can in school. nea

Send comments on this story to ajehlen@nea.org.

nea.org

VISIT WWW.NEA.ORG/REF?ARTS FOR LINKS TO ARTS INTEGRATION IDEAS AND ORGANIZATIONS AND THE NATIONAL POLL ON ATTITUDES TOWARD IMAGINATION AND ART EDUCATION.

PHOTO: CAMERON SCOTT

Silencing Cyberbullies

Digital sticks and stones can't break bones—but they can hurt even more. What educators can do to curb bullying in cyberspace.

BY CINDY LONG

Ryan Halligan was bullied so relentlessly at school, he finally learned kickboxing to defend himself from the physical assaults. But when the attacks moved online, he had no way to fight back, and no refuge. Day and night, he received e-mails and instant messages from classmates ridiculing him and calling him a loser. When a pretty girl at school pretended to like him online but later revealed she was only joking, the taunting e-mails and instant messages increased, only with even more venom. A few weeks later, in October 2003, Ryan hanged himself in his family's bathroom. He was 13 years old.

Now, Ryan's father travels to schools around the country to share the events that led up to his son's suicide and to warn educators and students about the dangers of cyberbullying. "Please don't ever forget Ryan's story," he says, "or the fragility of adolescence."

Cyberbullying is the use of electronic technology to deliberately harass or intimidate. Unlike the schoolyard bully of yesteryear, the cyberbully can hide behind online anonymity and attack around the clock, invading the privacy of a teen's home. With young people spending most of their free time online or texting their friends, digital bullies not only have ready access to victims, but also an audience—because without witnesses, virtual bullying loses its punch.

According to Pew Research, about one third (32 percent) of all teenagers who use the Internet say they have been targets of some form of cyberbullying that ranged from receiving threatening messages and having their private e-mails or text messages forwarded to having an embarrassing picture posted or rumors about them spread online.

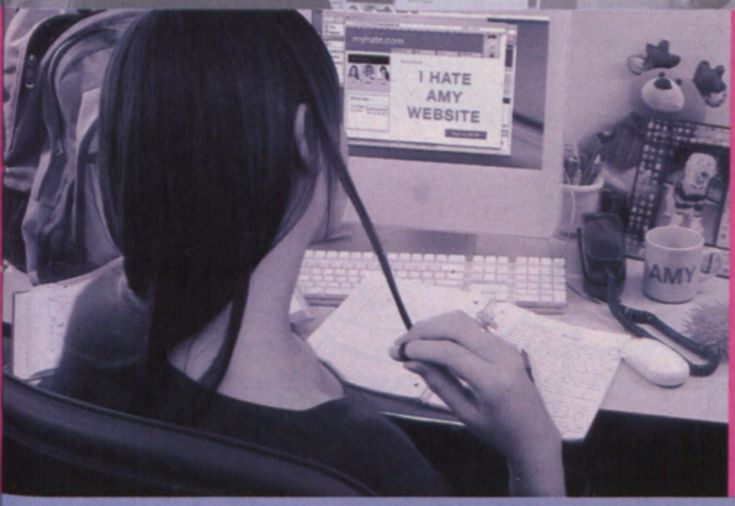
Cyberbullying captured national attention last year when the story broke of 13-year-old Megan Meier, a Missouri girl who killed herself after an Internet hoax in which a fictitious "cute boy" was created by the mother and sister of Megan's classmate. The boy befriended Megan on the social networking site MySpace, but when he suddenly ganged up on her online with her friends, Megan crumbled, reminding everyone how vulnerable teenagers are to social pressure and how the agony of being singled out escalates with the wider forum provided by technology.

Even the slightest perceived misstep can be humiliating for an adolescent struggling with developing self-esteem, says Pennsylvania seventh-grade computer teacher Cathy Smith. But with the widespread use of technology, those missteps can be broadcast to the world.

"Instead of an incident being seen or heard by a few surrounding students, embarrassing moments can be caught on video or camera from a cell phone and be broadcast to the entire school, community, and across the nation," she says. "Imagine yourself as an awkward seventh-grader walking down the hallway when suddenly you're tripped. Maybe it's an accident, maybe not, but someone...gets a picture of you sprawled on the floor with your belongings thrown to the wind....Now with camera phones, that moment can show up on YouTube for the entire world to see...and the victim gets humiliated over and over again every time someone new sees the incident."

As Ryan Halligan's and Megan Meier's parents can attest, cyberbullying incidents can be far more hurtful and humiliating than a video of someone tripping in the hallway. Even at Smith's middle school, some boys created an animation on a Web site where they virtually "beat up" one of their classmates on a regular basis and invited others to join them in the beatings. On another occasion, a "popular girl" placed her digital camera under a bathroom partition to capture an "unpopular" girl in a compromising position. In yet another incident, some of the middle school girls were pictured on a "Hot or Not" list that was e-mailed around to be voted on.

PHOTOS: NEVADA WIER, GROFF CREATIVE, INC.; IMAGE ASSEMBLY: GROFF CREATIVE, INC.



"There's a 'pile on' mentality that can quickly escalate so that the victim feels the whole school is against them." —Caitlin Johnson

Cyberbullying runs the gamut from minor incidents to major concerns, all of which should be addressed by educators, says Nancy Willard, executive director of the Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use. "At the major concerns level, the students who are victimized can become very depressed. They're likely unable to study or focus in class and may avoid school, leading to school failure," she says. "Some are committing suicide. Some are engaging in school violence. Teachers must be concerned."

But what can educators do? "Talk about it," says Cathy Smith. "Define it and discuss expectations and consequences. Don't ignore it or take it lightly."

To get kids talking about cyberbullying, Smith meets her students where they live: online. She often shows them a video from the Ad Council where four middle school girls sit down together at school. After saying hello cheerfully, one looks over at her classmate and says matter-of-factly, "Megan, you're a tramp. Ryan Fitch told me you made out. Everyone knows. He says your breath smells like garbage....You're the most desperate girl he knows, besides your mom. How many boyfriends does she have?" After several more cruel comments, the girl finally stops her insults, the screen goes black, and a sentence appears: "If you wouldn't say it in person, why say it online?"

"This ad really got a reaction from the kids," Smith says. "They see how much farther kids will go and how cruel they'll get when they're able to type words in an e-mail or text and not have to say them face to face."

Smith also takes her kids to www.netsmartz.org where they download activity sheets and watch online videos. The "Real Stories" section has the most impact, Smith says, especially a video called *You Can't Take it Back*, which plays on students' empathy and on an event that occurred at their school. It's narrated by a teenage boy who rated his female classmates on a "Hot or Not" site created by one of his friends. He thought it was funny, but had no idea what he'd written would be sent around to the whole school for all the girls to read. He was dismayed to see some of the girls crying about it the next day, but he was most distressed to find out his younger sister had been added to the site after he'd seen it. "She was crying when I got home and wouldn't even look at me," he says.

"I think the kids can really empathize with the boy," Smith says.

That's because most kids aren't intentionally vicious. Educators acknowledge that there will always be bullies who often have problems that require counseling and parental intervention, but many kids simply get roped in by the bullies.

"A lot of other kids get involved because it seems fun and they don't really understand the effect of what they're doing, until it snowballs," says Caitlin Johnson, editor of bNetS@vvy (www.bnetsavvy.org), a newsletter designed to help kids stay safer online, sponsored by the NEA Health Information Network. "There's a 'pile on' mentality that can quickly escalate so that the victim feels the whole school is against them."

That's why experts agree that addressing the bystander is the best way to curb cyberbullying. By encouraging the bystander to have the courage to intervene rather than take part, most incidents of cyberbullying would fizzle before catching fire online.

"We must focus on peer leadership, or bystander, strategies," says Nancy Willard. "Peers have the ability to support the bully—directly or by their silence—or to challenge the bully by refusing to take part."

She also recommends emphasizing the behavior of the students, regardless of the technology they're using. "We may not understand or engage in cyberspace the way these children can, but they're not developmentally ready to consistently make good decisions about how they use it. As adults, our area of expertise is in human relations, behavior, and effective problem-solving. This is the insight our children and teens need from us." nea

Send comments on this story to clong@nea.org.

nea.org

FIND STRATEGIES TO HANDLE CYBERBULLYING AT WWW.BNETSAVVY.ORG, CHECK OUT PBS'S *GROWING UP ONLINE*, AND VIEW A CLIP FROM THE AWARD-WINNING FILM ON CYBERBULLYING *ADINA'S DECK* AT WWW.NEA.ORG/REF?CYBERBULLYING.

STOP 'SUMMER LOSS'

Don't let students' smarts slip.

BY ALAIN JEHLEN

Go to the beach this summer, look for school-age kids, and watch carefully. Can't you just see last year's hard-earned knowledge and skills squirting out of their heads?

This has actually been measured: According to an extensive research summary by Harris Cooper of Duke University, the average student loses at least a month's worth of learning over the summer.

"What did you do on your summer vacation?"

"I forgot!"

How much kids forget varies by subject and social class. Reading comprehension falls steeply for low-income students, but only slightly for wealthier kids. Why? Maybe because in well-off homes, there's more reading. And wealthier kids often go to educational programs that build language skills. Amazingly, most of the achievement gap between low-income and more affluent kids can be accounted for by this difference in summer loss.

Math skills go down even more sharply than reading during the lazy days of summer, and the loss is about the same for rich and poor.

How to combat this seasonal brain slump? Studies show summer school and other learning programs help, so encourage your students to sign up. But there's a lot more you can do. Here are ideas from experienced educators and the Center for Summer Learning at Johns Hopkins University. They don't all agree—figuring out what's best is up to you!

Make a summer learning directory.

Put together a summer directory for parents describing the programs offered by libraries, museums, zoos, recreation departments, and so on in your area. (Include the fees!) Some communities have such directories, but if yours doesn't, it's not hard to make one if you share the work with colleagues. Jennifer Brady, a former elementary teacher now with the Johns Hopkins Center for Summer Learning, suggests organizing a summer learning fair in the spring where representatives of summer programs can talk with parents.

Take your kids to the library.

Get them used to the place before the summer break. "Librarians have been running summer programs since the 1800s," notes Brady. "There's always something going on." (If you can manage to keep your school library open, too, all the better.)

Suggest summer projects.

"Have your kids record their summer experiences through a journal, photo collections, [or] interviews with friends and family members," says Carol Foresta, a former New York secondary school teacher now at Bank Street College. Next fall in class, "there should be some sort of performance in which they show rather than tell what they learned or thought about. They can write a rap song or a play about one hot day."

How can you get them to work on this when school's out?

"I find peer pressure can help," says Foresta. "Build teams of kids who live near each other or hang out together. (They might, of course, goof off together as well, but so it goes!)"

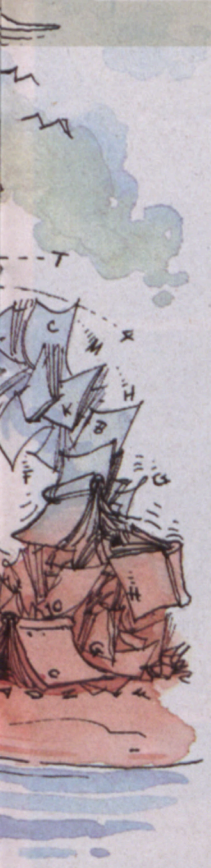
Blog.

"Set up a blog that involves interaction and reaction from the students," says Ann Nichols, who teaches service-learning and also special education in Florence, South Carolina. "You have to get students to invest in it before school lets out. It could be a series of math or logic problems. Or reviews of summer

nea.org

AT WWW.NEA.ORG/REF?SUMMER YOU'LL FIND MORE TIPS ON CURBING SUMMER LOSS AND A PLACE TO SHARE YOUR OWN IDEAS, AS WELL AS TWO SUMMER LEARNING TIPSHEETS FOR PARENTS THAT YOU CAN PRINT OUT OR ADAPT FOR YOUR SITUATION.

ILLUSTRATION: DAVID CLARK; PHOTO: DEBBIE BLAKE



movies, books, or television. It could be competitive and involve teams of students from different teachers or even different schools."

Suggest books.

Some teachers assign summer reading while others say that's useless (see "Keep It Fun" at right). But you can certainly send home reading ideas and suggestions for academic practice and exploration.

"Don't put all your eggs in one basket," says Brady of the Summer Learning Center. "Some kids enjoy doing worksheets," so you might send some of those home as an option.

Here are more tips you can give parents, from the Center for Summer Learning:

PREPARE FOR FALL. Find out what your child will be learning next year by talking with teachers at that grade level. Preview concepts and materials over the summer. (Brady finds kids are eager to start the year with a leg up on the competition.)

PRACTICE MATH DAILY. Measure items around the house. Track daily temperatures. Add and subtract at the store. Cooking is a chance to learn fractions. Everyday experiences can offer fun opportunities for kids to learn.

GET OUT AND PLAY. Limit TV and video game time, just as you do during the school year. Physical activity contributes to healthy development.

DO GOOD DEEDS. Students learn better and "act out" less when they engage in community service.

BOOK LISTS

Summertime, and the reading is easy

Summer reading lists are probably the most common way teachers try to stop summer loss, and there are plenty of excellent lists online. How do you get kids to read? Offer them fascinating books! Try books chosen by kids, not just grown-ups.

The International Reading Association publishes an annual children's list, a young adults' list, and a teachers' list of the best new books. NEA's Read Across America lists the top kids' picks and the top educators' picks among both classics and new works.

Link to these lists at **www.nea.org/ref?readinglists.**

Keep it Fun!

BY MICHELLE WISE CAPEN

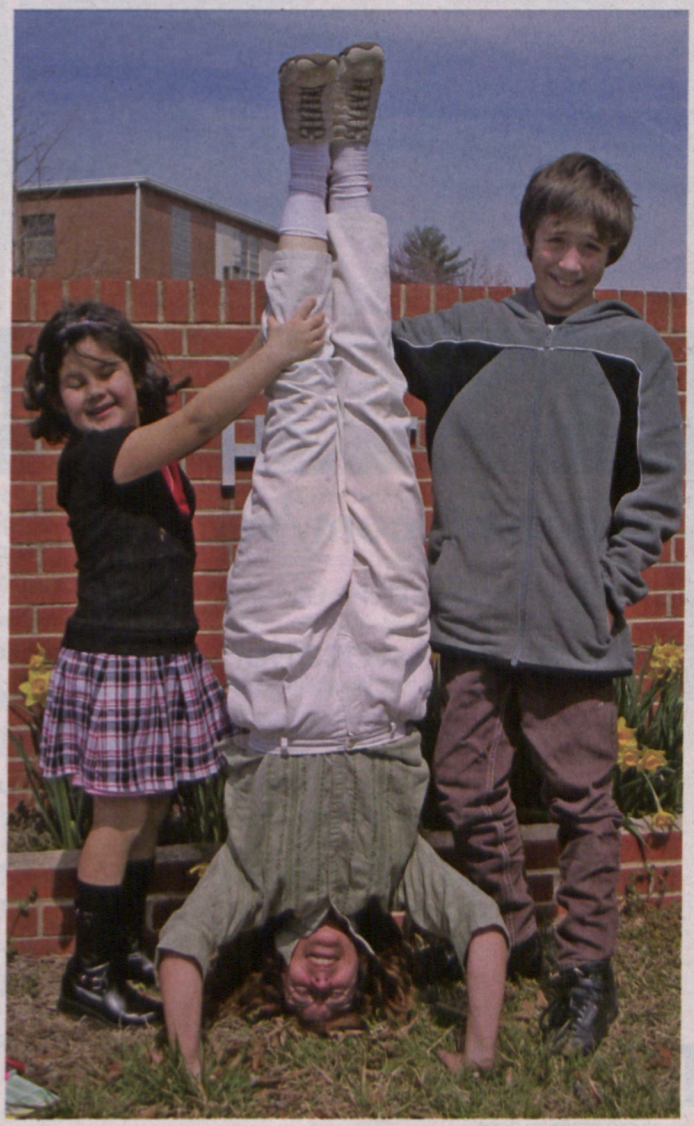
Summer is the time to learn for the sake of learning. Learn a craft, create a photo journal, draw sketches of insects, read comic books! Allow your brain to stretch and enjoy! That applies to both teachers and students.

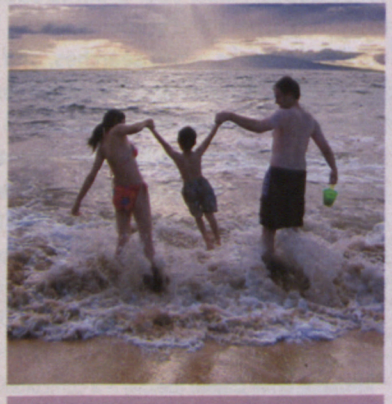
Puzzle books, word searches, and Sudoku are great activities for car trips. Puzzles and board games are also fun ways to keep the brain sharp over the summer.

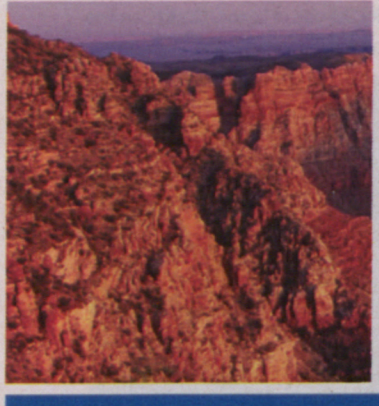
PLEASE DON'T send home required reading lists or assign journaling or math packets over the summer because that kind of assignment is more likely to stifle life-long learning than to encourage it. Anyway, it won't get done until the weekend before school starts.

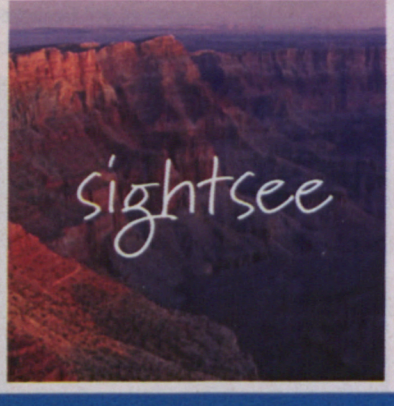
Summer is the time to learn just because it's fun to learn.

Michelle Wise Capen (below) is a curriculum coach and lead teacher at Whitnel Elementary School, in Lenoir, North Carolina









Enter the June NEA Great Escape

Visit **neamb.com/vac1** during the month of June to win an NEA vacation.

Can you see yourself touring the ancient Mayan ruins in Cozumel or sailing to Half Moon Cay in the Bahamas? Be sure to visit the NEA Member Benefits Web Site in June for a chance to win the vacation of your dreams. You could be headed for paradise.

- **$1800 gift certificate** towards a cruise, vacation package, or all-inclusive resort.*
- Your choice of **hundreds of destinations** in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Bahamas and Caribbean Islands.
- **Accommodations for two** adults; discounts for children may apply.*
- For discounts on air travel and all your travel needs, take advantage of our new discount program, **NEA Click & Save**.

Remember to visit neamb.com/vac1 in June.

Note: You may also enter by calling 1-800-637-4636.
*Some restrictions may apply. See Web Site for details.

nea Member Benefits
neamb.com

WSNT0508

the guide ...to summer fun

> Bug Control: you and your environment

HAVE A GREAT BREAK WITHOUT BREAKING YOUR BUDGET

BY GINI KOPECKY WALLACE

The Bard said it: Summer's lease really does have "all too short a date." Here's how to make the most of it without depleting your savings.

HEAVENLY BODIES. The night sky is filled with wonders, and all you have to do to enjoy them is look up. The Perseid meteor showers peak on August 12, says Frank Cianciolo, senior program coordinator for the McDonald Observatory Visitors Center in Austin, Texas. Get away from lights and start watching after 1 a.m. You could see two or three a minute. To learn more about the Perseids and other summer events—including June's low-transiting moon, July's three-star Summer Triangle, and the gathering of four planets in August—go to http://stardate.org, www.skyandtelescope.com and www.spaceweather.com.

GLORIOUS GARDENS. "There's always something in bloom at a public garden," says Madeline Quigley, of the American Public Gardens Association. At the New York Botanical Garden, June brings roses and tree lilac; July means daylilies and hydrangea, and August brings water lilies and lotus. "Many gardens also offer activities ranging from day camps, to concerts, to evening mixers with plant-inspired cocktails." Go to www.publicgardens.org to search for public gardens by city and state or scroll listings. Visit www.ahs.org for other garden events.

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS. More than 750,000 visitors flocked to the Indiana State Fair last year to enjoy the midway rides, watermelon seed-spitting contests, and more. "And that was an off year because of the heat," says public relations manager Andy Klotz. Go to www.statefairdates.com for a list of state fairs and links to their sites. Go to www.festivalusa.com or www.festivalfinder.com to learn about other festivals across the country. And make sure to check out NEA Member Benefits Click 'n Save at www.neamb.com for ticket discounts to all sorts of other summer attractions, especially water parks!

PICK YOUR PLEASURE. Blake Slemmer's mother often took her kids to pick-your-own farms when he was little. "We'd pick blueberries, strawberries, peaches, and apples and help her and my grandmother make applesauce," says Slemmer, a Georgia software developer who created a farm information site at www.pickyourown.org, now maintained by farmers and farm visitors.

PHOTO: MEIKO ARQUILLOS

PARKS AND HISTORIC SITES. "When people think about visiting a national park, they usually think of the iconic natural parks—Grand Canyon and Yellowstone," says Laura Loomis, of the National Parks Conservation Association. "But there are 391 units in the national park system, and many are little known but very fascinating. About two-thirds preserve our cultural and historic heritage, and many don't charge." Go to www.nps.gov to research destinations such as Guadalupe Mountains National Park in Pine Springs, Texas, which boasts the world's finest fossilized coral reef, and the house in Glen Echo, Maryland, that was home to Clara Barton, founder of the American Red Cross.

BIRD-WATCHING. "It's fun, it's easy, all you need is a guide and binoculars, and it's a great way to get outdoors and hang out with family and friends," says Chuck Remington, director of Field Support for Audubon's Centers and Education division. Audubon maintains more than 40 nature centers offering programs for kids and adults. Go to www.audubon.org to find them, read about top birding trails and what to watch for in different locales (the swallow-tailed kite in Florida, the trumpeter swan in Washington state), or learn birding basics. You needn't leave home to bird-watch, says Remington. Birds are everywhere. "The endangered pied-billed grebe makes its home in Brooklyn's Prospect Park."

VOLUNTEER. Whatever your interests, there's an opportunity calling to you and a number of organizations eager to help you find it. At www.idealist.org, you can search by interest, skills, language, location, time frame, and suitability for kids, adults, families, and/or groups. "There really is something for everyone," says Erin Barnhart, manager of Volunteerism Initiatives. "And during the summer, there are so many outdoor projects that let you get outside, make a contribution, and have a good time." Example: Barnhart's recent one-day volunteer outing with friends. "We went on a hike and helped clean up trails. We had a blast." Other good sites to visit: www.usafreedomcorps.gov, www.getinvolved.gov, and www.habitat.org.

Buzz Off! Best Ways To Keep Mosquitoes at Bay

Need ideas for fending off the pesky buggers? Retired Navy Medical Entomologist Joseph Conlon, technical advisor to the American Mosquito Control Association, reviews the options. Go to www.mosquito.org for more.

	WHAT YOU CAN DO	USING REPELLENTS	WIND, SMOKE, & FUN STUFF
Option 1	**Cover Up** Wear long sleeves, long pants, and socks whenever possible. Keep in mind that mosquitoes are drawn to dark colors and can bite through tight-fitting clothes.	**The Big Three** Only DEET (best), picaridin (close second) and oil of lemon eucalyptus (a plant product) are CDC-recommended as effective and EPA-approved for use on skin.	**Citronella Candles & Mosquito Coils** Citronella candles don't work much better than smoke from any source. And, while coils work, they contain potent insecticides that can be toxic in enclosed spaces.
Option 2	**Reduce Odors** Avoid perfumes, colognes, hair sprays, body lotions, and other scented products that may attract mosquitoes. Drinking alcohol can also attract them.	**Lotions & Potions** Many essential oils, such as oil of clove, work only at strengths that smell bad and/or harm skin. Avon Skin-So-Soft repels slightly, mostly by creating a film barrier.	**Wind Effects** Mosquitoes can't buck a breeze. To keep them off your deck or porch on still evenings and make it harder for them to track you, plug in an outdoor fan.
Option 3	**Be Still** Mosquitoes can detect carbon dioxide from human breath at a distance of 30 meters and home in on body heat and movement. Fidgety people make easier targets.	**For Hunters & Campers** The U.S. military pre-treats camouflage outfits with permethrin, a potent repellent that lasts through multiple washings. Buy clothing at surplus stores.	**Gadgets & Gizmos** Electric zappers are a no-no—they mostly kill larger insects that birds and bats eat. And, while carbon-dioxide traps do work, they don't make a dent overall. Worst of all, misting systems promote resistance!
Joe Conlon says	"Sometimes women attract mosquitoes, possibly due to hormones. Sometimes men do, because they're larger and emit more carbon dioxide. If a woman wants to avoid bites, she should stand near a big, fidgety man—and vice versa."	"The best repellent is the one you actually use, but caveat emptor. People make claims about all sorts of things that haven't been tested. Some swear by fabric softener sheets, but there's no evidence they work."	"Salespeople say that the citrosa geranium and other plants repel mosquitoes when planted around a house. But any repellent would be in the oil, and you have to crush the leaves to get it out."

PHOTOS: GROFF CREATIVE, INC.

NEA MEMBERS INSURANCE TRUST PLAN
2006 SUMMARY ANNUAL REPORT
(Trust Plan Year Beginning September 1, 2006)

The following is the summary annual report for the NEA Members Insurance Trust® Plan (Trust), Employer Identification Number 52-1126682, including information for NEA Life Insurance® Program, NEA Accidental Death & Dismemberment Insurance Program, NEA DUES-TAB® Program, and NEA Medicare Supplement Program for period beginning September 1, 2006, and ending August 31, 2007. The annual report has been filed with the Internal Revenue Service, as required under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

BASIC NEA MEMBERS INSURANCE TRUST FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The value of Trust assets, after subtracting liabilities of the Trust was $124,168,519 as of August 31, 2007, compared to $114,520,858 as of September 1, 2006. During the Trust year, the Trust experienced an increase in its net assets of $9,647,661. This increase includes unrealized appreciation and depreciation in the value of Trust assets; that is, the difference between the value of the Trust assets at the end of the year and the value of the assets at the beginning of the year or the cost of assets acquired during the year. During the Trust year, the Trust had total income of $101,715,425 including participant contributions of $83,845,019, realized gain of $12,277,699 from the sale of assets, and earnings from investments of $13,997,707. Trust expenses were $92,067,765. These expenses included benefits paid to participants and beneficiaries, administrative and other expenses.

INFORMATION FOR NEA LIFE INSURANCE PROGRAM

The Trust has a contract with Minnesota Life Insurance Company to pay all NEA Preferred Term Life Insurance claims and The Prudential Insurance Company of America to pay all other NEA Life Insurance claims incurred under the terms of this program. Because it is a so called "experienced rated" contract, the premium costs are affected by, among other things, the number and size of claims. The total contributions for the Trust plan year beginning September 1, 2006, and ending August 31, 2007, made under such "experienced-rated" contract were $45,455,825 and the total of all benefit claims paid under the contract during the Trust year was $37,762,158. The total number of participants was 489,197.

INFORMATION FOR NEA ACCIDENTAL DEATH & DISMEMBERMENT (AD&D) PROGRAM

The Trust has a contract with The Prudential Insurance Company of America to pay all NEA AD&D claims incurred under the terms of the Trust. Because it is a so called "experienced rated" contract, the premium costs are affected by, among other things, the number and size of claims. The total contributions for the Trust plan year beginning September 1, 2006, and ending August 31, 2007, made under such "experienced-rated" contract were $2,928,880 and the total of all benefit claims paid under the contract during the Trust year was $2,422,771. The total number of participants was 152,703.

INFORMATION FOR NEA DUES-TAB PROGRAM

The Trust has a contract with The Prudential Insurance Company of America to pay all NEA DUES-TAB claims incurred under the terms of the Trust. The NEA DUES-TAB Program is self-supporting and paid by premiums from the NEA Members Insurance Trust funds rather than from Member contributions. The total contributions for the Trust plan year beginning September 1, 2006, and ending August 31, 2007, were $1,882,612 and the total of all benefit claims paid under the contract during the Trust year was $2,065,464. Benefits charged, less benefit claims paid, were $1,657,971 which is comprised of incurred but unreported claims and a pooled claim charge. Trust expenses, less benefit claims paid, were $52,318 in premium taxes and $165,939 in other expenses. The total number of participants was 3,101,608.

INFORMATION FOR NEA MEDICARE SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM

The total contributions for the Trust plan year beginning September 1, 2006, and ending August 31, 2007, were $12,243,637 and the total of all benefit claims paid under the contract during the Trust year was $8,541,672. The total number of participants was 7,150.

A federal regulation, known as the "HIPAA Privacy Rule" requires that we provide detailed notice in writing of our privacy practices. As a participant of the NEA Medicare Supplement Program, you have the right to request a copy of the privacy notice; mail inquiries to NEA Members Insurance Trust, Attn: NEA Member Benefits, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

As a participant, you have the right to receive a copy of the full annual report, or any part thereof for a reasonable charge or you may inspect the Annual Report without charge at the office of NEA Members Insurance Trust, Attn: NEA Member Benefits, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 or at the U.S. Department of Labor in Washington, D.C. You also have the right to receive from the Trust Administrator, on request and at no charge, a statement of the assets and liabilities of the Trust and accompanying notes, or a statement of income and expenses of the Trust and accompanying notes, or both. The Administrator will state the charge, if any, of the specific document you request so you can find out the cost before ordering.

NEA Members Insurance Trust

The 2008 NEA Representative Assembly

This summer, 9,000 NEA members elected by their state and local colleagues will gather in Washington, D.C., for the annual NEA Representative Assembly (RA), July 1–6. The RA is the Association's highest decision-making body. Delegates will be voting on the proposed amendments listed below, as well as electing NEA's President, Vice President, two members of the Executive Committee, and possibly a Secretary-Treasurer, should a vacancy in that position occur. You can find day-to-day coverage of RA debates and action by going online to www.nea.org.

NOTE: Proposed insertions of language are underscored; proposed deletions are shown in [ ].

Proposed Amendments to the NEA Standing Rules, Constitution, and Bylaws for vote by the 2008 Representative Assembly.

STANDING RULE AMENDMENT 1

TITLE: To require a delegate to ask a question when recognized to speak on a point of information.

Rule 6. Order of Business and Debate
(no location in the Standing Rules given)
Delegates recognized to speak on points of information must ask a question.

IMPACT STATEMENT:
Because the NEA governing documents do not define points of information, the matter is controlled by *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, which states that a point of information "must always be put in the form of a question." Consistent with *Robert's*, a delegate who is recognized to speak on a point of information is not only required to ask a question, but is also prohibited from entering into debate. If a delegate fails to adhere to this prohibition, it is the practice of the presiding officer to direct him or her to do so. This amendment would not change the current practice.

The maker of the amendment did not indicate a location. If adopted, the Committee on Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules will insert it at an appropriate place in Standing Rule 6.

Contact Person: Jack Tucker, Illinois

STANDING RULE AMENDMENT 2

TITLE: To require that new business items requesting dissemination of information via NEA Web sites and publications be accepted only if certain conditions are met.

Rule 6. Order of Business and Debate
(no location in the Standing Rules given)
Items of new business requesting dissemination of information via NEA Web sites and publications, such as *NEA Today*, will only be accepted if

1. A written request for dissemination of information has been made directly to the NEA Interactive Media staff; and
2. The above request has been turned down by the staff or dissemination has not occurred within a year of the request.

IMPACT STATEMENT:
If this amendment is adopted, the maker of all new business items that request, in whole or in part, dissemination of information via NEA Web sites and/or publications would be required to submit with his or her new business item a written statement indicating when, by what means (e.g., e-mail, letter), and to which NEA Interactive Media staff member he or she had made the necessary request, and the response received. (The Committee on Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules would prepare a form to be used for this purpose.) If the maker does not provide the necessary information, or if there has been timely compliance with the request to disseminate the information, the Committee would not accept the new business item.

If this amendment is adopted, it will become effective with new business items submitted for action at the 2009 NEA Representative Assembly. The maker of the amendment did not indicate a location. If adopted, the Committee on Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules will insert it at an appropriate place in Standing Rule 6.

Contact Person: Kathy Stonitsch, Wisconsin

STANDING RULE AMENDMENT 3

TITLE: To require that the position taken by the NEA Board of Directors on proposed amendments to the Constitution, Bylaws, or Standing Rules be presented with the amendment text.

Rule 11. Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules: Committee and Amendment Procedures

E. Board of Director Positions.
An NEA Board of Directors recommended position, including no position, shall be included with the text of any proposed amendment to the Constitution, Bylaws, or Standing Rules.

IMPACT STATEMENT:
This amendment would require that the position taken by the NEA Board of Directors on proposed amendments to the Constitution, Bylaws, or Standing Rules (i.e., support, opposition, no position) be included with the text of the proposed amendments. If this amendment is adopted, the positions taken by the Board of Directors would be included with the text of the proposed amendments printed in *RA Today*.

Contact Person: Kimberly Rose, Washington

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT 1

TITLE: To allow the NEA Bylaws to provide NEA membership for certain persons who are not education employees, and to prohibit such members from serving as officers of the Association, members of the Board of Directors, or delegates to the Representative Assembly.

Article II. Membership
Section 2. Membership Eligibility: Provisions and Limitations.

a. Membership, as provided in the Bylaws, shall be open to persons engaged in the profession of teaching or in other educational work and to persons interested in advancing the cause of public education who shall agree to subscribe to the goals and objectives of the Association and to abide by its Constitution and Bylaws.

e. Persons interested in advancing the cause of public education who are not active or retired education employees and who are not student members and who are granted membership pursuant to Section 2(a) above shall not have the right to serve as officers of the Association, as members of the Board of Directors, or as delegates to the Representative Assembly.

IMPACT STATEMENT:

The first part of this amendment would amend Article II, Section 2(a) to allow the NEA Bylaws to provide NEA membership for certain persons who are not education employees. The 2006 Representative Assembly amended Bylaw 2-1(a) and (g) to establish an Associate membership category for non-education employees who are "interested in advancing the cause of public education," and who meet certain other requirements. These Bylaw amendments have been held in abeyance and cannot be implemented without Constitutional authorization. They will be implemented if this Constitutional amendment is adopted.

The second part of this amendment would add a new Article II, Section 2(e), which would prohibit persons who are granted NEA membership because they are "interested in advancing the cause of public education"—but are not active or retired education employees, or NEA Student members—from serving as NEA officers, members of the NEA Board of Directors, or delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly.

An NEA membership category open to non-education employees interested in advancing the cause of public education existed prior to the 1993–94 membership year. The 1993 NEA Representative Assembly amended Article II, Section 2(a), of the NEA Constitution and NEA Bylaw 2-1 to eliminate the category.

An amendment that was the same as the proposed amendment to Article II, Section 2(a) was defeated by the Representative Assembly in 2006 and 2007, but the 2006 and 2007 amendment did not include the proposed addition of a new Article II, Section 2(e).

Contact Person: Jane R. Stern, Maryland

BYLAW AMENDMENT 1A

TITLE: To make persons employed in private sector preschool programs, private sector elementary/secondary schools, and other private sector institutions devoted primarily to education eligible for NEA Active membership.

Bylaw 2. Membership
2-1. Categories.

b. Active membership shall be open to any person (i) who is employed by or in a public school district, private elementary or secondary school, public or private preschool program, public or private college or university, or other public or private institution devoted primarily to education, regardless of the specific nature of the functions that the person performs at the work site and regardless of who actually employs the person; (ii) who is employed by a public sector employer other than a school district, college or university, or other institution devoted primarily to education but who is employed primarily to perform educational functions; (iii) who is on limited leave of absence from the employment described in items (i) and (ii) above; or (iv) who is serving as an executive officer of the Association or of a state or local affiliate. The Association shall continue to allow Active membership to those Active members (i) who have been laid off due to a reduction in force for as long as such persons are eligible to be recalled, or for three (3) years, whichever is longer; or (ii) who have been discharged for as long as a legal challenge to such discharge is pending.

An Active member who is engaged in or on a limited leave of absence from professional educational employment shall hold or shall be eligible to hold a baccalaureate or higher degree or the regular teaching, vocational, or technical certificate required by his or her employment or shall be an exchange teacher who is regularly employed as a teacher in another country.

Active membership is limited to persons who support the principles and goals of the Association and maintain membership in the local and state affiliates where eligible. The Association shall not accept as Active members persons who are not eligible for Active membership (or the equivalently designated membership category) in the state affiliate, unless the state affiliate (i) by action of its board of directors (or equivalent governing body) approves such acceptance and (ii) enters into an agreement with the Association pursuant to which the state affiliate agrees to function as the Association's agent for the delivery of Association services and programs to the members in question. Approval by and a service agreement with the state affiliate shall not be prerequisites to the Association's acceptance into Active membership of persons who are not eligible for active membership (or the equivalently designated membership category) in the state affiliate if said persons are members of a local affiliate that (i) is comprised predominantly of persons who are not eligible for active membership in the state affiliate and (ii) was a local affiliate of the Association as of the effective date of this amendment.

IMPACT STATEMENT:

Under Article II, Section 2(a), of the NEA Constitution, only "persons engaged in the profession of teaching or in other educational work" are eligible for any category of NEA membership. In order to be eligible for NEA Active membership, a person must, in addition, meet the requirements set forth in Bylaw 2-1(b). With two exceptions, Bylaw 2-1(b) limits NEA Active membership to public sector education employees. The exceptions are for (1) employees of private sector colleges and universities, and (2) private sector employees who perform their services "in" a public school district or other public sector education worksite. This amendment would expand the categories of private sector education employees who are eligible for NEA Active membership to include persons employed in private sector preschool programs, private sector elementary/secondary schools, and other private sector institutions devoted primarily to education.

The fact that a person is eligible for NEA Active membership under Bylaw 2-1(b) does not necessarily mean that NEA can accept that person as an NEA Active member. The third paragraph of Bylaw 2-1(b)—which is not changed by this amendment—makes the state affiliates the gateway to NEA Active membership. If an employee who is eligible for NEA Active membership is also eligible for Active membership in the state affiliate, NEA can accept the person as an Active member. If, on the other hand, the person is not also eligible for Active membership in the state affiliate, NEA can accept the person as an Active member only if the state affiliate gives its approval, and agrees to function as NEA's agent for the delivery of services and programs to the member in question.

Contact: NEA Board of Directors

BYLAW AMENDMENT 1

TITLE: To prohibit the Representative Assembly meeting agenda from including items, practices, or procedures that will exclude any delegate based on race, religious beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, physical challenges, or other differences.

Bylaw 3. Representative Assembly
3-5. Meetings: Location and Agendas.
a. No meeting shall be held in any location where any delegates are likely to experience discriminatory treatment.
b. No meeting agenda shall include items, practices, and procedures that will exclude any delegate based on race, religious beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, physical challenges, or other differences.

IMPACT STATEMENT:
This amendment would add to Bylaw 3-5—which currently prohibits the Representative Assembly from meeting in any location where any delegates are likely to be subject to discrimination—a provision that would prohibit the Representative Assembly meeting agenda from including any items, practices, or procedures that will exclude any delegate based on race, religious beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, physical challenges, or other differences.

Bylaw 4-1(b) directs the NEA President to "[p]repare the agenda for the governing bodies of the Association and the program for the Annual Meetings." If this amendment is adopted, the President would be responsible for determining whether any items, practices, or procedures should not be included on the Representative Assembly meeting agenda.

Contact Person: Michael Weilein, California

BYLAW AMENDMENT 2

TITLE: To give NEA-Retired, rather than the NEA Board of Directors, the power to adopt (and amend) the NEA-Retired Bylaws.

Bylaw 8. Affiliates and Special Interest Groups

8-6. NEA-Retired.
The NEA-Retired shall be an organization comprised solely of the Retired members of the Association. [The bylaws of NEA-Retired shall be adopted by the Board of Directors of NEA.] The president of NEA-Retired shall be chosen by the retired delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly.

8-14. Standards for NEA-Retired.
The NEA-Retired shall operate in accordance with its bylaws [adopted by the Board of Directors], which shall be compatible with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Association.

The NEA-Retired shall conduct all elections with open nominations and a secret ballot.

IMPACT STATEMENT:
The NEA Board of Directors currently has the power to adopt (and amend) the Bylaws of NEA-Retired. This amendment would take this power away from the NEA Board of Directors and allow NEA-Retired to adopt (and amend) its own bylaws. This amendment would not change the requirement in NEA Bylaw 8-14 that the NEA-Retired Bylaws "shall be compatible with the Constitution and Bylaws of" NEA. This means that the NEA-Retired Bylaws could not change the eligibility criteria for NEA-Retired membership (which is addressed in NEA Bylaw 2-1(d) and NEA Bylaw 8-6), the dues of NEA-Retired members (which is addressed in NEA Bylaw 2-7(h)), the process for electing the NEA-Retired President (which is addressed in NEA Bylaw 8-6), and the requirement for elections with open nominations and a secret ballot (which is addressed in NEA Bylaw 8-14). In the event of a conflict between the NEA Constitution/Bylaws and the NEA-Retired Bylaws, the former would be controlling.

Contact: NEA Board of Directors

Candidates Running for Office

Candidate for NEA President

DENNIS VAN ROEKEL

NEA stands proudly as the greatest hope—the greatest collective voice—for students and their right to a quality public education. Perhaps this journey requires too great a stretch of the imagination for some, but for you and me this is not a fantasy; it is our collective vision—a promise that NEA leadership must keep to our members, students, and the nation.

NEA must continue to advocate for educational professionals, to engage and tap the skills of others to transform NEA into a stronger and more effective organization, to build communities of support and advocacy for public education, and to promote and preserve the opportunity for all students to succeed. Together we can make a difference.

Candidate for NEA Vice President

LILY ESKELSEN

The work of the NEA has never been more important. Public education is a target of privateers who dream of profits and politicians who want easy answers and who don't understand what our students need to learn to prepare them for the lives they want to live. Our students, from preschool to graduate school, need our strong voice of experience and common sense. Every member of the NEA is part of that voice. I've worked as a school lunchworker, a teacher's aide, and a teacher. I've served my Association as bargaining chair, state president, and as NEA Secretary-Treasurer. It's clear that NEA's strength lies in collective action that strives to build respect for the voices of all who work in our public schools, colleges, and universities.

Candidates Running for Office (cont.)

Candidates for NEA Secretary-Treasurer, in the event of a vacancy

BECKY PRINGLE

"Education is the great equalizer...the balance wheel of the social machinery." Horace Mann's words capture the incredible responsibility NEA faces as guardian of public education.

Advancing public education through advocacy must be at the forefront of NEA's work. Some believe an advocate speaks the loudest. I believe true advocates are change agents—strong voices inspiring action.

The NEA Secretary-Treasurer must be a proven advocate for our members and students, an experienced executive who understands budgeting processes, and a consensus builder who values the power of our diverse organization. With a collective focus on our mission, that "balance wheel" of public education will achieve its intended purpose: to prepare all students to live, learn, and prosper in our democratic society.

MARSHA SMITH

Marsha Smith is a third generation educator from Olney, Maryland, who has been a professional educator for more than 30 years. Born an "Army Brat" in Ft. Benning, Georgia, educated in Germany, Japan, Alabama, New Jersey, and Kansas, and having received a B.S. from Tuskegee University, Alabama, Marsha has taught in New Jersey (NJEA member), Texas (TSTA member), and Maryland (MSTA member).

Currently an NEA Executive Committee member, Marsha served on NEA's Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules, and Budget Committees, Health Information Network Board, Great Lakes Research Board, National Membership Strategy, WLTP and MLTP training, and with the National Governors' Association to name a few.
Marsha says, "NEA must advocate for members and students. We must continue to support Great Public Schools with exceptional staff, engaged students, and involved communities."

Candidates for NEA Executive Committee

DONNA DEKRAAI

Students have a right to a quality public education and that right is being threatened. It will take leaders who are dedicated and strong to ensure this country maintains a system of education that is outstanding and available to all students. Working together as Association members, with our diversity making us even stronger, we will prevent outside entities from dismantling public education. Forming coalitions with other associations and the community will be crucial. Team NEA has and will continue to lead the way.

PRINCESS MOSS

The time has come for us to be proactive, progressive, and productive.

Proactive—we need to rekindle our founding principle of being leaders in advocating education reform, frontrunners in developing education policy, and champions in preserving education best practices.

Progressive—we need to embrace new opportunities, new technologies, and new ideas to ensure the highest quality public education.

Productive—we need to put all of our energies and all of our efforts into helping the NEA navigate the challenges and influence the direction of public education.

Together we can ensure that the NEA continues its place in the forefront, leading the way in public education.

LEN PAOLILLO

For over 150 years the NEA has been the voice for education professionals. Our Association is guided by certain principles. We believe in equal opportunity for all learners and have an unwavering commitment to the principle of collective action. We know that public education is critical to achieving a democratic and just society, that community partnerships are essential to our success, and that educators deserve the same status, respect, and compensation due all professionals. It is imperative that NEA leaders not only believe and advocate for these principles, but that they are knowledgeable and deeply committed to this work on behalf of our 3.2 million members. Our future is bright as we work collectively to ensure a quality, 21st century education for every student.

resources

41 **Grants & Awards** Last year, more than 3,000 girls and women benefited from $900,000 in grants from the Women's Sports Foundation. Could girls in your school benefit in 2008?

43 **Take Note** Find out about a unique program that has police collecting and distributing books to children on their neighborhood beats.

43 **Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities** Confused about the differences between ADA and IDEA? We've got an online fact sheet that can help.

44 **National Teacher Day** Ready for May 6? We've got downloadable posters, activity ideas, and more.

46 **Diversity Calendar** May is Asian Pacific American Heritage Month.

Deadline Approaching for the NEA Foundation's June 2008 Grant Review

APPLICATIONS ARE DUE BY JUNE 1, 2008, FOR BOTH THE *STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GRANTS* AND THE *LEARNING & LEADERSHIP GRANTS*

Student Achievement Grants provide $5,000 to improve the academic achievement of students by engaging them in critical thinking and problem-solving that deepens their knowledge of standards-based subject matter.

Learning & Leadership Grants provide opportunities for teachers, education support professionals, and higher education faculty and staff to engage in high-quality professional development and lead their colleagues in professional growth. The grant amount is $2,000 for individuals and $5,000 for groups engaged in collegial study.

THE NEA FOUNDATION
www.neafoundation.org

Recipients will be notified by August 15, 2008. Grants fund activities for 12 months from the award date. For more information, including guidelines and applications, visit **www.neafoundation.org** or call (202) 822-7840.

TEACH GREEN, WIN GREEN

To encourage educators to "live green," Discovery Education and General Motors will award 40 educators in public middle and junior high schools $1,000 each to implement inventive classroom lessons on the environment or renewable energy initiatives. Winners will also be invited to participate in an online professional development program promoting school-specific green initiatives. As part of the Webinar series, grant recipients will each receive a free digital camera to document their experiences teaching environmental or renewable energy lessons.

Teachers of grades 5–9 are eligible to participate. Applicants must submit online a 750-word essay that explains how they will advance student learning about sustaining resources through the use of new and emerging technologies. Essays should demonstrate vision, creativity, and a novel way of presenting environmental and energy-related concepts.

The deadline to apply is **May 15**. For more information and to apply, visit **http://livegreen.discoveryeducation.com**.

EARN AN INTERACTIVE WHITEBOARD FOR YOUR SCHOOL

The SMARTer Kids Research Foundation is offering educators the chance to earn an interactive whiteboard for their classroom. Over a minimum of six months, selected participants will conduct a study of a learning environment that uses either the SMART Board interactive whiteboard (which allows teachers and students to write and erase notes, use the touch-sensitive screen to control computer applications, and save information for review), or a Senteo interactive response system (an assessment tool that provides a wireless connection between students and teachers, allowing teachers to quiz and poll students at any time and receive their responses instantly), or a combination of the two.

North American preservice and in-service teachers, graduate students, college and university instructors, and professors are eligible to apply, either as individuals or teams. Applicants must submit a research proposal that includes:

A SPECIFIC research goal
A DESCRIPTION of technology as a tool, not a subject
A SOUND, rigorous research methodology
A FOCUS on learning, teaching, or professional development outcomes.

Projects conclude with a research paper detailing your study's findings.

Applicants must have a computer and digital projector to participate. The Foundation will loan successful applicants a Front Projection SMART Board interactive whiteboard with floor stand, and, if appropriate to their research, a Senteo interactive response system. When all program requirements have been met, the loaned product will be donated to the participating school.

For details on completing a proposal, visit **http://smarterkids.org/research/details.asp**. The deadline to apply is **July 1, 2008**.

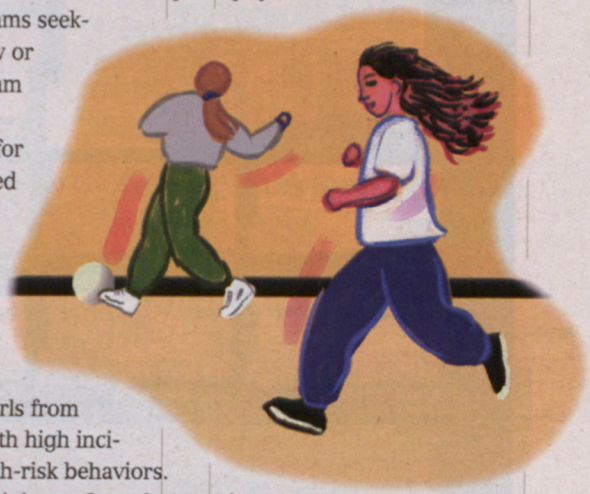
TOSHIBA MATH & SCIENCE GRANTS

Toshiba America Foundation grants support inquiry-based projects designed by individual teachers and small teams of teachers for use in their own classrooms to improve teaching and learning in science and mathematics. Classroom teachers must be involved in planning projects and be ready to initiate projects upon receipt of funds.

Grants can cover any subject area in science and mathematics; new ideas are welcome, but be sure to review the list of exclusions. The large grant cycle (awards of $5,000 and more) for grades 7–12 is now active. The deadline to apply is **August 1, 2008**. Visit **www.toshiba.com/tafpub/jsp/home/default.jsp** for complete guidelines and a downloadable application.

GRANTS SUPPORT GIRL ATHLETES

Sponsored by the Women's Sports Foundation, GoGirlGo! Grants provide financial assistance to sports/physical activity programs seeking to add new or expand program participation opportunities for an under-served population of girls ages 8–13, particularly economically disadvantaged girls, and/or girls from populations with high incidences of health-risk behaviors. Delivery of a minimum 8-week sports/physical activity program is required, along with implementation of the free GoGirlGo! curriculum.



Girl-serving organizations (schools, Boys & Girls Clubs, nonprofit organizations, YWCAs, etc.) may apply, although preference is given to organizations that work consistently with girls throughout the year. A total of $430,000 will be awarded. (In 2007, the average grant awarded was $5,700.)

Visit **www.womenssportsfoundation.org/cgi-bin/iowa/funding/featured.html?record=40** for guidelines and an application form. The deadline to apply is **May 9, 2008**.

Take Note

INDOOR ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ONLINE TRAINING COMING SOON!

The NEA Health Information Network (NEA HIN) will unveil one of its first online trainings at this year's Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. Training on environmentally safe and healthy schools will be made available to NEA members and staff in July 2008. This interactive course is part of the NEA Academy, which aims to meet the professional needs of NEA members.

Participants can learn about school Indoor Environmental Quality (IEQ) through a 6-, 10-, or 30-hour certificated course addressing subjects such as mold, chemicals and green cleaning, asbestos, fiberglass, ventilation, and more. Information, tools, and strategies needed to effectively address IEQ problems at the local level will also be covered, including how to use health and safety as an organizing tool.

The site will also be accessible for users who want to search for specific issues and will house ready-to-use training materials that can be downloaded and used to train others in your Association, school, or community.

To learn more, go to **www.neahin.org** or send an e-mail to Jennie Young at **jyoung@nea.org**.

NEA OUTLINES THE BENEFIT BATTLE

In many states, defined-benefit plans—the most secure type of pension—are under attack. In others, health care premiums are rising, and it's falling to employees, not employers, to pay the extra cost. Mindful of the challenges posed nationwide to educator and paraprofessional benefits, NEA has developed a clear and concise document outlining the threats and the Association's plan of attack. This brief, useful guide will be available to all members and state affiliate staff, providing an easily digested overview of the threats to retiree health care, Social Security, Medicare, and pensions. It will also explain what NEA is doing to protect and improve those benefits.

There's another important component for members: a quick look at how they can lend a hand in the fight, through such methods as coordinated lobbying with state and local affiliates. Visit **www.nea.org/takenote/pensiondocs.html** for the document, which will be available in early **July 2008**.

LOOKING FOR FUTURE TEACHERS

This summer, NEA Teacher Quality plans to release a report on key programs around the country that seek to recruit and support students from diverse backgrounds to consider teaching careers. The report will include information garnered at conferences and feedback from state and local affiliates that have significant experience in organizing teacher education classes and career academies.

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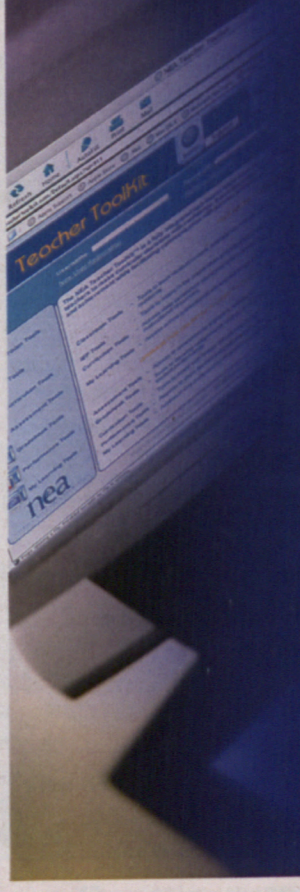

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Great Public Schools for Every Child

It will highlight exemplary programs and statistics on the effectiveness in recruiting teachers from diverse backgrounds, as well as provide reference and resource links.

But you don't need to wait to get the report to start learning about such programs. Check out South Carolina's Teacher Cadet Program at **www.cerra.org/cadets**. The program's primary goal is to encourage academically eligible students who have exemplary interpersonal and leadership skills to consider teaching as a career. An important secondary goal of the program is to provide these talented future community leaders with insights about teachers and schools so that they will be civic advocates of education.

COPS 'N' KIDS 'N' READING

In 1997, Racine, Wisconsin, police officer Julia Burney (now Burney-Witherspoon) responded to a burglar alarm. It was a false alarm, but she found a warehouse stuffed with 10,000 children's books that were headed for the shredder because of small printing or binding imperfections. "I thought the heavens had opened up for me," she recalls. Her work had taken her into many Racine homes, and she had been struck by the lack of children's books. Soon, she and her fellow officers were carrying books in the trunks of their squad cars and giving them away to children. The original 10,000-volume stockpile went fast, and children clamored for more, so the police started collecting books.

That was the birth of Cops 'n' Kids, a program now in about 70 cities and towns across the country. In Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, NEA-Retired member Beverly Bradley heads up an effort that has so far distributed more than 160,000 new and gently used volumes.

"It's a chameleon kind of program," says Bradley. "It can be adapted to fit any community concerned with children and literacy." Her program maintains well-stocked bookshelves in police stations where children can come in and choose a book for themselves—and meet the police at the same time. The program also distributes books in many other locations and at special events.

To get involved with Cops 'n' Kids for your area, contact Julia Burney-Witherspoon at (262) 632-1606 or **jburney@cops-n-kids.org** or Beverly Bradley at **lvcops-n-kids@ att.net**.

ADA, IDEA, AND EQUAL RIGHTS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Confused about the overlapping protections for students with disabilities provided by the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)?

NEA special education expert Patti Ralabate has developed a fact sheet that can help. In a nutshell, she says, ADA applies to all ages, including postsecondary students, and guarantees students with disabilities access to the same education as non-disabled students, along with "reasonable" accommodations to make sure they can take advantage of that education. But IDEA does more for the students it covers: It requires schools to give them an appropriate education designed specifically for them.

A 2007 report from the National Council on Disabilities concluded that "the education gap between people with disabilities and people without disabilities is shrinking" and added, "though variable in quantity and quality, educational supports and services for students with disabilities are now available at most of the nation's 3,000 post-secondary institutions." The report said "the most significant improvements [because of ADA] appear to have occurred in telecommunications, transportation, and access to public accommodations."

Meanwhile, disabled individuals, including students, are winning international recognition of their equal rights during the past year as the new United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities moves closer to ratification. The Convention does not create any new rights, but it does specifically prohibit discrimination against people with disabilities in all sectors of life.

The Convention affirms equality of rights for people with disabilities, the principle of non-discrimination and equal recognition in law, the right to liberty and security, the right to personal mobility and an independent life, and the rights to health, work, education, and participation in political and cultural life. More than 120 countries have signed the treaty and, as of press time, 18 had ratified it, making it binding law in their territories. The treaty will take effect when 20 countries have ratified it. The United States has not signed. NEA has urged the President to sign and the Senate to ratify the treaty.

Read Ralabate's fact sheet, the National Council report, and more on the history and impact of ADA at **www.nea.org/ref?ADA-IDEA**.

NEA OFFERS PRAXIS STUDY GUIDE FOR FUTURE EDUCATORS

NEA is committed to placing highly qualified teachers in every classroom. Most states require that new educators pass the standardized Principles of Learning and Teaching test—which addresses topics such as human growth and development, educational psychology, classroom management, and evaluation and assessment—before they can become licensed. Check out our online tutorial to familiarize yourself with the test format, review sample questions, learn to relieve test anxiety, and more. Included is advice on approaching multiple-choice questions, case studies, and writing constructed responses. You must be a member to use this free resource. Go to **www.nea.org/student-program/praxis.html**.

"Help right all the wrongs in the so-called No Child Left Behind Law. Join me in making a generous contribution to The NEA Fund for Children & Public Education today."

Sallie Clark,
Special Education Teacher,
Liberty Middle School
Edwardsville, Illinois

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A PATRIOT'S HONOR

As we celebrate Memorial Day this month, we honor the men and women who have died while in military service to our country. The earliest are Revolutionary War soldiers, remembered at a memorial in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The Tomb of the Unknown Revolutionary War Soldier stands in Washington Square as part of a memorial that also honors George Washington.

For most of the 1700s, the square was used as a cemetery, first as a potter's field and then as the site of mass graves for thousands of soldiers killed during the Revolutionary War. Some died of war wounds, others from disease and starvation, including many held in the nearby Walnut Street jail in squalid, inhumane conditions during the British occupation of Philadelphia in 1777.

After the war, the square was used again as a mass grave, for victims of a Yellow Fever epidemic. Eventually, the city began a project to beautify the square, but it wasn't until the mid-1950s that the Tomb of the Unknown Revolutionary War Soldier was erected. Inside the tomb, one 20-year-old male soldier, located in 1956 by archaeologists, has been interred. An eternal flame burns nearby to honor all of the fallen.

The tomb lacks the same kind of honor guard that patrols the better-known one in Arlington National Cemetery. Educators and students who want to participate in a campaign, requesting that a military guard be posted at the tomb, may write to Dr. Robert M. Gates, Secretary of Defense, 1000 Defense Pentagon, Washington, D.C., 20301-1000.

NATIONAL TEACHER DAY—MAY 6

Always celebrated on the Tuesday of the first full week in May, this event owes its birth to Arkansas teacher Mattye Whyte Woodridge, who began corresponding with political and education leaders in 1944 about the need for a national day to honor teachers. Eleanor Roosevelt carried her message to Capitol Hill, and in 1953, persuaded the 81st Congress to proclaim National Teacher Day. Today it is part of National PTA's Teacher Appreciation Week.

You'll find more information and resources at NEA's Web site, including poster art, sample press releases that you can copy to promote your events, lists of suggested activities, and more. Go to **www.nea.org/teacherday**.

CALL FOR PAPERS: 'THE SEAMLESS WEB OF EDUCATION'

Thought & Action, NEA's refereed higher education journal, invites submissions from the Association's K–12 educators for a Special Focus section in the 2008 issue of the journal.

More than 30 states now have some type of P–16 or P–20 commission to oversee the state's education systems from pre-kindergarten through graduate school. These commissions, and the concept of the "seamless web" of education itself, raise a plethora of issues for educators at all levels of instruction. As an organization comprising teachers and education support professionals at all levels of learning, NEA members are in a unique position to address the questions raised by this movement toward a more unified educational enterprise for our nation. Some of those questions are:

HOW EFFECTIVE are early college high school and dual enrollment programs?

ADVANCED Placement courses—which work and which don't?

HOW CAN high school teachers prepare students for college?

WHAT CAN colleges do to help?

Interested in contributing to the discussion and sharing your insights? Visit **www2.nea.org/he/heta/index.html** to view the Call for Papers. The deadline for submission is **June 1, 2008**.

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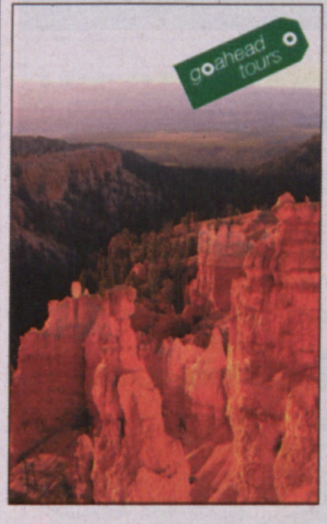

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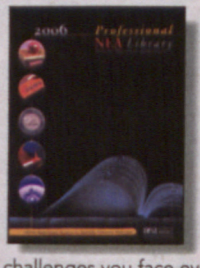

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Diversity Calendar

MAY

MAY 1–31—NATIONAL PHYSICAL FITNESS AND SPORTS MONTH

Sponsored by the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, this is a great time to start regular physical activity and exercise. Visit www.fitness.gov for information and a toolkit.

MAY 2—HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

This day is set aside to honor victims of the Holocaust and remember what can happen when bigotry, hatred, and indifference reign. For more, go to www.ushmm.org/remembrance/dor/calendar.

MAY 4—HORACE MANN'S BIRTHDAY

Horace Mann (1796–1859) is considered the father of U.S. free public schools. For a brief biography, visit www.phd.antioch.edu/Pages/horacemann.

MAY 4–10—TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK

In 1984, the PTA established Teacher Appreciation Week to honor the men and the women who educate our children. Visit www.pta.org/archive_article_details_1121183059437.html.

MAY 4–10—BE KIND TO ANIMALS WEEK

Created by the American Humane Association in 1915, this event celebrates the unique bond between humans and animals. For information, visit www.americanhumane.org.

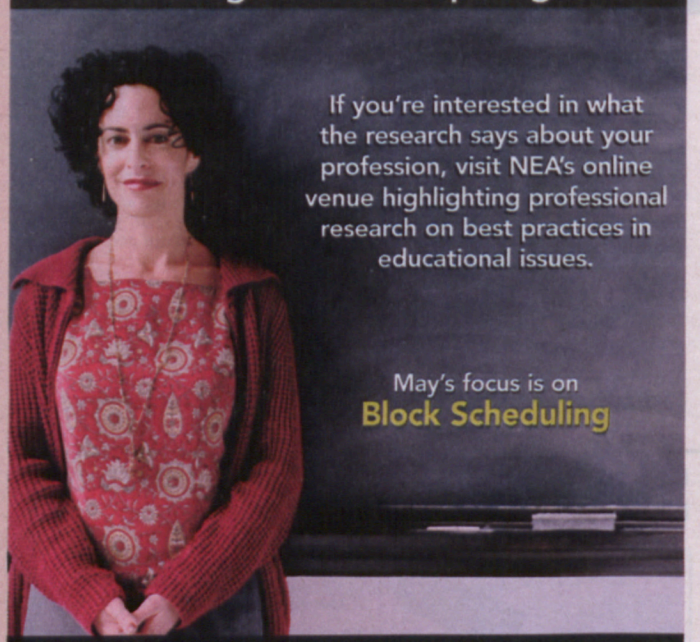
MAY 5—CINCO DE MAYO

The anniversary of the 1862 Mexican victory over the French army at the Battle of La Puebla is more widely celebrated in the United States than in Mexico, where it is a regional holiday.

MAY 7—NATIONAL SCHOOL NURSE DAY

Healers, comforters, mentors, role models, critically needed members of every school community—NEA salutes school nurses! Go to www.nea.org/events/nurseday.html to find out more.

Teaching Research Spotlight


If you're interested in what the research says about your profession, visit NEA's online venue highlighting professional research on best practices in educational issues.
May's focus is on
Block Scheduling

Learn more at www.nea.org/ref?mayresearch

MAY 17—ANNIVERSARY OF SCHOOL DESEGREGATION RULING

In its 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* ruling, the Supreme Court found racial segregation in public schools to be unconstitutional and in violation of the 14th Amendment.

MAY 22—INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

This day is dedicated to raising awareness of the danger to species from habitat destruction and pollution. The theme for 2008 is *Biodiversity and Agriculture*. For more information, visit www.cbin.ec.gc.ca/ibd/default.cfm?lang=e.

MAY 26—MEMORIAL DAY

This holiday commemorates U.S. men and women who have died in military service to their country. A good classroom activity for middle and high school students is available at NEA's Web site at www.nea.org/teachexperience/ifc060523.html.

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

Honor the history and accomplishments of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, a group with diverse histories, languages, and cultures. Some good resources:

NEA'S ASIAN AMERICAN BOOKLIST www.nea.org/readacross/resources/aabooks.html
THE SMITHSONIAN www.smithsonianeducation.org/educators/resource_library/asian_american_resources.html
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS www.loc.gov/topics/asianpacific/about
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES http://hhsu.learning.hhs.gov/AsianPacific07
ASIA FOR EDUCATORS http://afe.easia.columbia.edu
ASK ASIA www.askasia.org
THE ART OF ASIA www.artsmia.org/art%2Dof%2Dasia
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BOOKS

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY: a story of the battle for Tarawa Atoll. Available @ amazon.com, authorhouse.com and bn.com

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Display ad prices are based on $800 per column inch.

Frequency or member discounts available. Complete pricing information is outlined on the Insertion Order.

Contact:

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LITTLE LANGUAGE LEARNERS

'Head, shoulders, rodillas y dedos del pie'

BY ANN BORDERS

THE DRAMATIC SHIFT OF No Child Left Behind is most apparent in the half-day kindergarten class. Early learning used to be about socializing, getting familiar with school, identifying colors, alphabet letters, and numbers. Now children are expected to read sentences, add to 10, write a paragraph, and know the names of geometric solids.

My biggest challenge in meeting these goals was a recent class of 19 students with 13 bilingual and non-English-speaking children from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. How would we ever communicate, much less meet academic goals?

My first concern was physically not losing any of them. It happened once, years ago, when a child followed her new friend off the bus. The mother called: "Where's my baby?" The principal and I went door to door in the neighborhood, looking for this girl. Fortunately, we guessed right and found her quickly.

Now, I photograph every student individually and with a guardian. Pictures are taped on desk folders, my exit door, and in the substitute teacher folder. Buddies walk and sit with new students on the bus and in the playground.

> "My first concern was physically not losing any of them. It happened once."

Kindergartners are always happy on the first day of school. (It's the mothers who are outside crying—foreign-born and native alike.) But the second day is a challenge. Parents write down words for "bathroom" and "Mommy will come back" in each language. Bilingual students from other classes translate in emergencies—mostly bathroom emergencies. Many still face hours surrounded by people talking gibberish.

Ann Borders and her students published a multinational cookbook.

Fortunately, they soon learn to understand some English. Comprehension always comes first. Speaking in more than one-word phrases takes longer. My second concern: How do we teach English vocabulary?

We have an outstanding reading and writing program but one of the first lessons begins, "Have your students close their eyes and imagine...." After I stopped laughing and crying, I wondered what the students would think if I asked them or pantomimed the lesson. Would they think I was asking them to take a nap? Children often come to me with their ABC's memorized, but when I start to teach them to blend sounds together, it turns out they don't know what "cat" and "hat" mean. We need a common vocabulary.

Music, photographs, field trips, and food give us shared experiences so we can develop that vocabulary. Having the same body parts helps, too: We sing the song "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes" in different languages.

Children photograph common objects and actions to make labeled, class books. There's nothing like a child hanging upside down on the monkey bars or sliding gleefully down the slide to teach action verbs.

We visit the farmers' market where children ask the names of fruit, gourds, pumpkins, and vegetables. We buy, taste, compare, describe, illustrate, write about, and graph favorites. This gives us more common words to use in our notebooks, word wall, and phonics and writing lessons.

We cook recipes children bring from home and photograph cooking sequences. We photograph everyone eating, some with wrinkled noses. Over the course of the year, we make recipes and class books for every letter of the alphabet. Hardbound cookbooks with photographs, student writing, and book lists go home with every child at the end. We integrate reading, math, science, language—a little of everything.

We learn simple phrases and counting in many languages. Each child is a teacher. But the primary focus is on English because they all have to take the state test in third grade. By then, they not only have to know the grammar and vocabulary, but also be able to think in English, which is a lot harder.

Ultimately, children make friends, share experiences, and learn English. Most are at grade level by the end of the year, with help from my parents, colleagues, previous students, the English as a Second Language teacher, a local foundation grant, and a supportive principal. It takes hours of extra work, contract variances, stress, and time thinking outside the box.

Is it worth it? Absolutely.

ANN BORDERS is a National Board-Certified Teacher at Logan Elementary School in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

PHOTO: ROBERT CHASE

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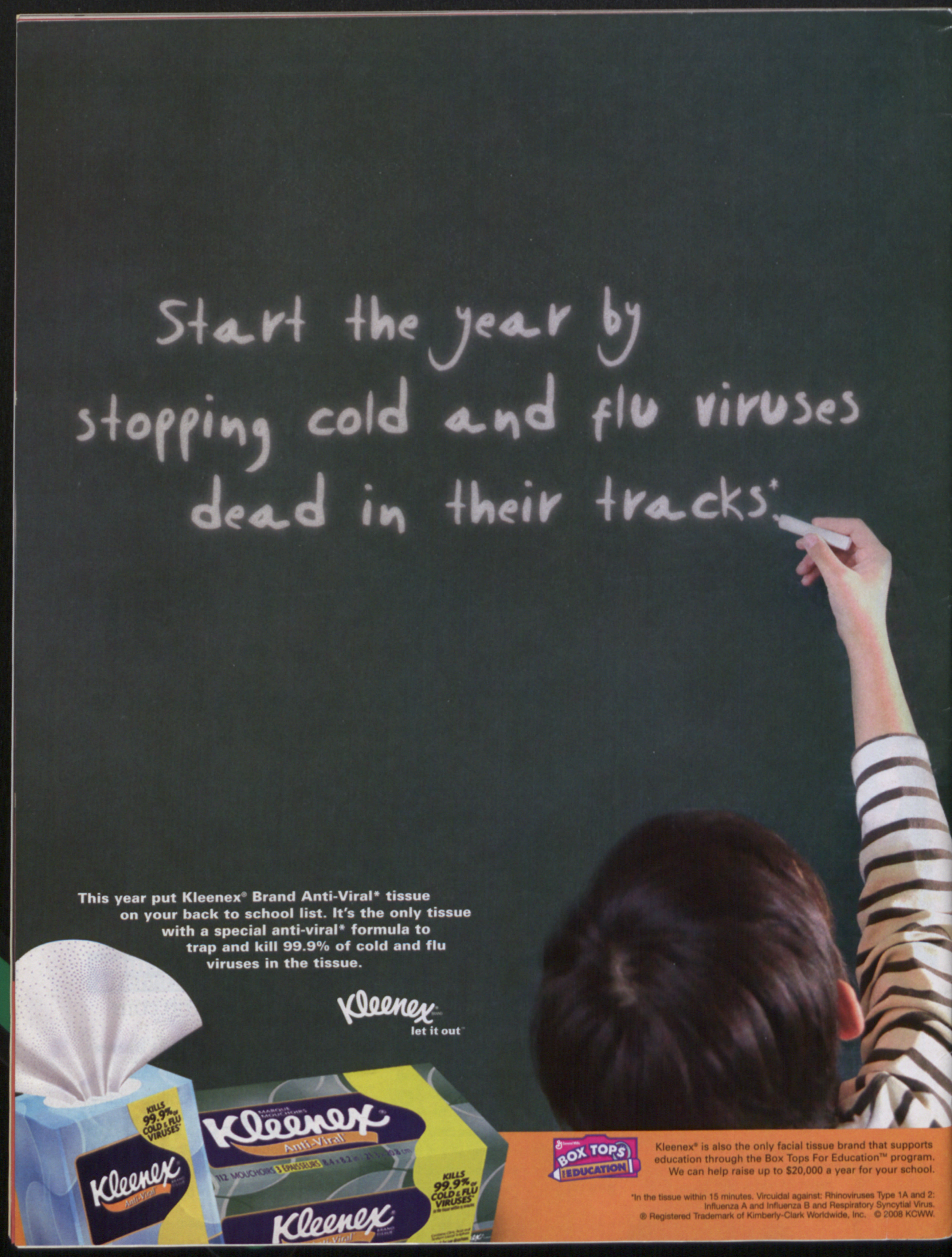
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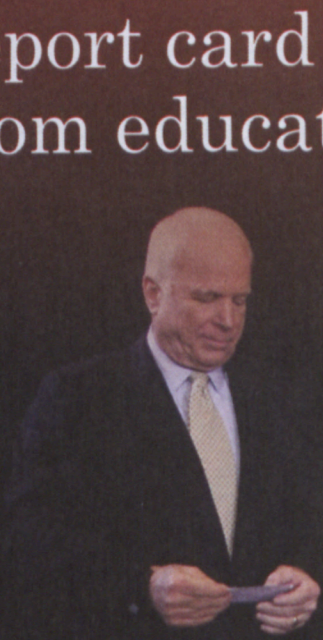
Inside:

John McCain just received his latest report card from educators.



See John McCain's report card at page 36 or visit www.nea.org/educationvotes

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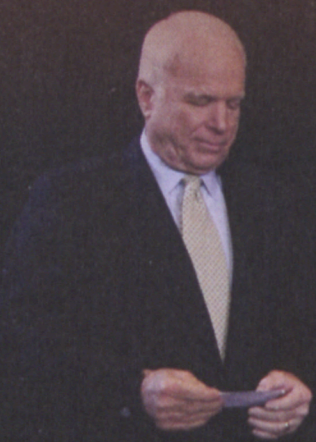

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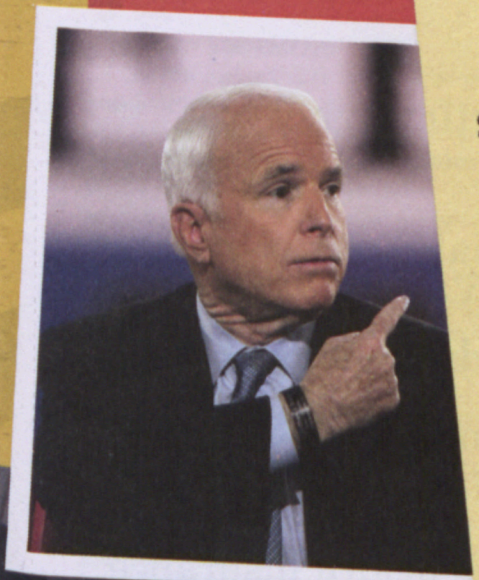
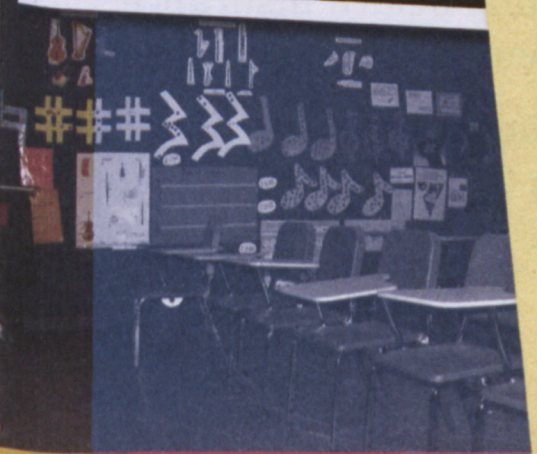
IMPORTANT NEA MESSAGE

For Education Support Professionals

Know the facts:





NEA CONGRESSIONAL REPORT CARD

Student Name: John Sidney McCain

Class: U.S. Senator

Phoenix, AZ

Age: 71

Final Grade: F

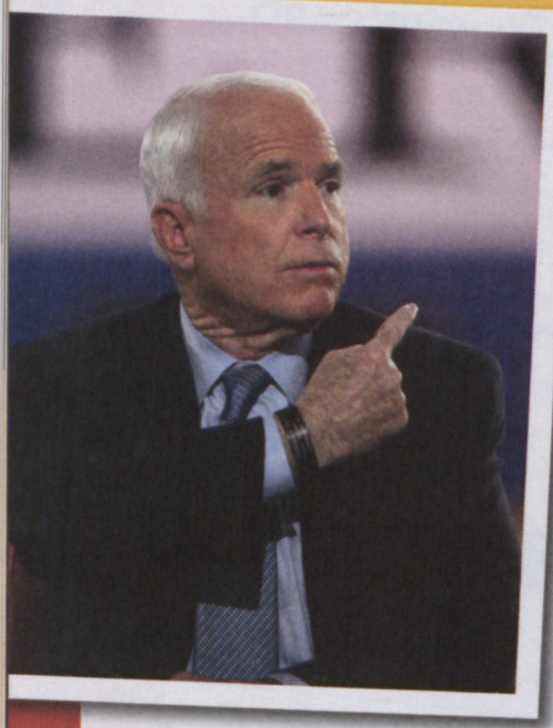
Subject	Grade
Senate Voting Record, 2007	F
Senate Voting Record, 2005–06	F
Senate Voting Record, 2003–04	F
Senate Voting Record, 2001–02	F
Senate Voting Record, 1999–00	F
Senate Voting Record, 1997–98	F

Grades based on NEA Congressional Report Card

Year After Year, John McCain Receives an F

"Competition is the key to success in education in America. That means charter schools, that means homeschooling, it means vouchers..."

– John McCain, Republican Presidential Debate, 12/9/07



CHECK JOHN McCAIN'S RECORD FOR YOURSELF:

- Voted to eliminate overtime pay for workers.[1]
- Wants to privatize Social Security and voted against increased funding for the Medicare prescription drug program.[2]
- Voted repeatedly against an increase in the minimum wage.[3]
- Voted against providing health insurance to low-income children.[4]
- Voted against $5 billion in public school funding while voting for $70 billion in tax cuts for millionaires.[5]

CHECK THE FACTS:

1. S.256, Vote #27, 3/7/05
2. *The Washington Post*, 2/8/06; S.Con.Res.83, Vote #68, 3/16/06; H.Con.Res.83, Vote #66, 4/3/01
3. H.R.2, Vote #23, 1/24/07, Vote #24, 1/24/07, Vote #37, 1/31/07; S.2766, Vote #179, 6/21/06; S.256, Vote #26, 3/7/05
4. H.R.976, Vote #307, 8/2/07
5. FY2006 Budget Resolution; H.Con.Res.95, Vote #114, 4/28/05; S.Con.Res.18, Vote #68, 3/17/05

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